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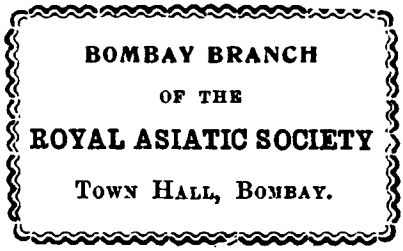

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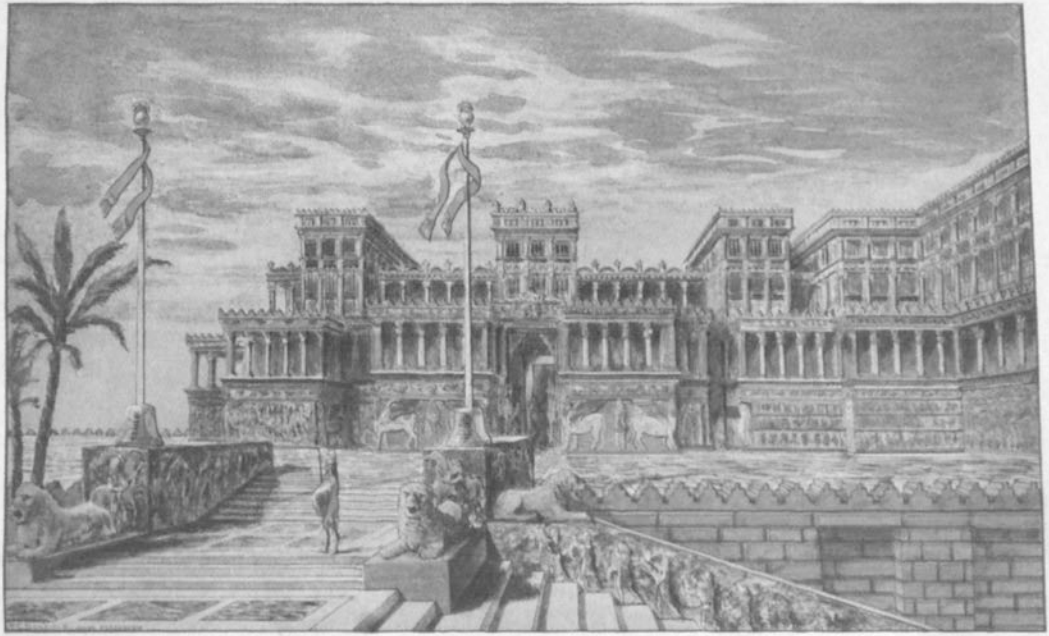
LIFE IN OLDEN TIMES
IN
BABYLON AND ASSYRIA



THE NORTH-EAST FRONT AND GRAND ENTRANCE OF SENNACHERIB'S PALACE AT NINEVEH.

LIFE IN OLDEN TIMES

IN

BABYLON AND ASSYRIA

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BY

ELEANOR TROTTER, B.A.

MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL ARCHÆOLOGY
AND MEMBER OF THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF
ARCHÆOLOGY IN EGYPT

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THIS book is written for the girls and boys in our schools, in the hope that it will quicken their interest in the life of long ago, and in the wonderful relics of that life which are now in the British Museum, so that, even after they have left school, our national collections may become one of the many interests which fill their hours of leisure.

PREFACE

MANY books have been written about the history of the ruined cities of Babylon and Assyria, all possessing supreme interest, not only by reason of their subject matter, but also in many cases through their delightful style.

I have given a list of some of these works, and I wish here to express my great obligations to the authors of them for the pleasure and benefit I have received during the many years that I have read their books.

And I should like to thank Mr. Nash, F.S.A., the Secretary of the Society of Biblical Archæology, for the kindly interest he has taken in this reading-book for school children, and for the valuable help he has given me in looking through the proof-sheets of it.

ELEANOR TROTTER.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

I wish to thank the Trustees of the British Museum for their courtesy in allowing me to photograph the objects from the Babylonian and Assyrian Collections which are given in this book.—E. T.

FIG. 1.—SEATED FIGURE OF GUDEA—*Photo, Mansell.*

FIG. 2.—CYLINDER SEAL SHOWING CHALDEAN WRITING.

Babylon and Assyria

CHAPTER I

THE LAND OF SHINAR

IF we take a boat at London Docks, and sail down the Channel, along the Mediterranean Sea, and round the coast of Arabia, we shall come to the Persian Gulf.

Look in the map (page 233) and you will see that two great rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, flow down into this gulf. If you trace the course of these rivers you will find that they rise in the mountains of Asia Minor.

Each spring the melting of the snows on the mountains causes the rivers to rise so high, that at last they overflow their banks, and spread

their waters over the level plain. As the flood subsides it leaves over the surface of the land a thick layer of the rich fine mud which the river torrent has brought down with it. This we call alluvial soil, and the yearly deposit by the rivers of the alluvial soil all over the country has gradually formed the fertile land.

Before reaching the sea the two rivers join and form one stream called at this day Shatt-el-Arab. At last the mighty torrent of water reaches the Persian Gulf, where it leaves at its mouth the mud it has brought down with it, and in course of years this has formed a delta.

All the land south of the dotted line you see on the map No. 2 is formed of alluvium. There are no rocks nor stones in it, and when it is well-drained, the soil is exceedingly fertile. In olden times there were more people living in this country than in any other part of the world. For this is the land of Shinar, of which we read in the Bible that, after the flood, when the people journeyed eastward, "they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there" (Genesis xi. 2). At first they probably lived in tents. Soon, however, they wanted to build houses. But in this flat level plain, formed entirely of the mud spread over the country year after year by the two rivers, there was no

building-stone. Even the rivers flowed through beds of mud instead of pebbles. Nor were there any forests where they might cut down trees and build log-huts. Only date-palms and cypress-trees grew along the river bank.

What were they to do?

They said to one another, "Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar" (Genesis xi. 3). There was all round them plenty of heavy clay soil which they moulded into bricks and left to dry. Then the sun, which is much hotter in the land of Shinar than ever we have it in England, drew all the moisture out of the bricks and baked them quite hard. There are also to be found in that country, even at the present day, springs of bitumen or pitch, and this was used in olden times for cementing the bricks together, just as it is used in London now to fill up the spaces between the wood blocks which pave our streets.

When the descendants of Noah came into the country they found people already living in it. These were the Sumerians, the people of Sumer or Shinar. They had found out how to drain the marshy land, plough it and sow it with corn, which grew in great abundance; indeed, it is

said that this fertile soil was the original home of the wheat, which has been brought from there to all the other countries of the world. The Sumerians had also invented a kind of picture-writing which, at first, they scratched on soft stone; later, they found that wet clay was a better material for writing on, and when it was baked hard by the sun or by fire in a kiln, the writing lasted for ever.

In the picture made by the seal-impression (Fig. 2) you see some of this very early Sumerian writing; there is an inscription in it written on the dress of the seated figure, which is a statue of a Sumerian ruler (Fig. 1).

It is probable that the Semites, as we call the descendants of Shem who invaded the land, had not found out how to do so many things as the Sumerians, or, as we say, they were not so civilised; they were, however, very clever in the study of the stars, and they had a better religion. They spoke a different language, and, in time, as the two races of people intermarried, the Semitic language only was spoken, though the older Sumerian language was still learnt so that the picture-writing inscribed on the stone and the clay might be understood.

Some of the tribes who came into the land of Shinar did not build houses and cultivate the

ground; they lived in tents, and their riches consisted in flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. They roamed about all over the country, only staying in one place long enough for their sheep and cattle to eat up the grass, then moving on to find fresh pastures; and, because they lived this kind of life, we call them Nomads or wandering people. These Nomadic people were divided into groups of families called tribes, each tribe being ruled by a sheikh or chieftain.

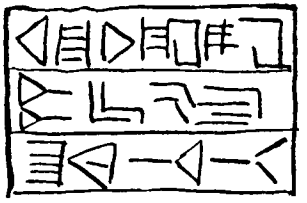

FIG. 3.—WRITING ON A LIMESTONE SLAB OF VERY EARLY PERIOD.

Thus we find there were three classes of people living in this country: the Nomadic tribes, the farmers who cultivated the ground, and the people who lived in the towns, for, as the inhabitants increased in number, large towns grew up all over the country.

If you go to the land of Shinar to-day you will see a wide flat plain, with here and there low hills dotted over it. Each hill stands by itself, and is quite different from any hill you may find elsewhere in the world.

For these hills have all been made by men. They are the remains of the great towns which

were built by the people who lived in the land thousands of years ago.

But how comes it that the remains of these towns have formed hills?

We have seen that the surface of the country consists entirely of the alluvial soil brought down by the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. It is so flat that marshes are formed everywhere when the rivers overflow, and the standing water in these marshes becomes very unhealthy in summer; it generally causes fevers to break out among people living near it. So the cities were built on great platforms of brick which raised them high above the marshes into fresher air. There were other advantages: people living in houses raised above the plain could keep a better look-out if an enemy approached; also if the Euphrates rose very high there was no fear of the water washing away their dwellings. And as the centuries rolled on, when the greatness of the nations departed and the cities sank into decay, the sunburnt bricks of which the houses and the platforms were built crumbled back again into the soil of which they were made. In time the grass grew over them, and, for hundreds of years no one knew that these low hills contained all that was left of great and powerful cities.

FIG. 4.—CHERUBIM—*British Museum.*

FIG. 5.—CYLINDER SEAL OF THE REIGN OF UR-ENGUR.

CHAPTER II

UR OF THE CHALDEES

AMONG the Semites who lived in the land of Shinar, there was one family who wandered far up to the north, even to Haran—the family of Terah, of whom we read in the book of Genesis, "And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there" (Genesis xi. 31).

Now think of the difference between a journey which you or I might take, and this journey of Terah and his family from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran. We generally know when we set out

for a place how long it will take us to get there. But Terah did not. He and his family could only travel very slowly, for they took all their possessions with them. And Terah was rich; not in gold and silver, which we are accustomed to think of as riches, but in flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, which were driven along by his servants, while Sarai and the other women rode on camels. The whole cavalcade would travel up the right bank of the Euphrates, where there was plenty of water and fresh grass; when they came to good pastureland they probably stayed in that place until all the grass was eaten. We are not told how often they stopped and camped, nor how long it took them to make the journey. At last they came to Haran. There Terah died, leaving his son Abraham the head of the family. And it was at Haran that God revealed Himself to Abraham, and told him to go into the land of Canaan. In the book of Genesis we read about the life of Abram, his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob, or Israel, as he is afterwards called; and almost all the books of the Old Testament tell us something about Jacob's descendants, who became in time the nation of the Israelites, from whose history we see how a nation grows out of a single family.

Do you remember the first of those commandments which God gave to the Israelites?—"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Why was this commandment given the first, the most important place? Because the children of Israel in the land of Canaan were surrounded by nations who worshipped many false gods; and you will find that a great part of the history of the Israelites, as it is given us in the Bible, is the account of their forsaking the true God and following after the false gods of their neighbours. At Ur, the city which Abram left, and at Haran, the place where he stayed for some time, the Moon-god Nannar, or Sin, was held in the greatest honour. Each city generally had one chief god, which was thought to be its special protector. There was no doubt a great deal of intercourse between Ur and Haran, since both these cities were devoted to the worship of the Moon-god.

FIG. 5A.—SEAL OF REIGN OF UR-ENGUR, FROM WHICH THE IMPRESSION IN FIG. 5 WAS TAKEN.

But how do we know this?

In 1854 a high mound on the right bank of the Euphrates, about a hundred and twenty-five miles from the Persian Gulf, was excavated.

Fig. 6 is a picture of one of the bricks dug up in it. The inscription, which you see stamped in the middle, says that it is a brick of Ur-Engur, King of Ur, who built a temple to Nannar, the Moon-god, and restored the walls of the city of Ur. From this inscription the excavators

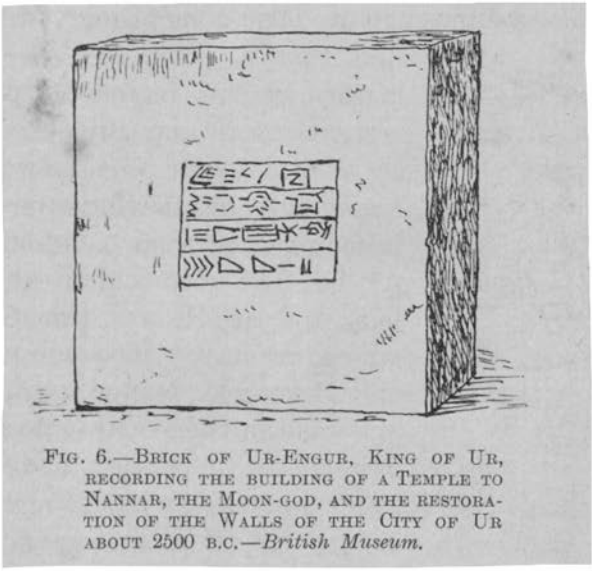

FIG. 6.—BRICK OF UR-ENGUR, KING OF UR, RECORDING THE BUILDING OF A TEMPLE TO NANNAR, THE MOON-GOD, AND THE RESTORATION OF THE WALLS OF THE CITY OF UR ABOUT 2500 B.C.—*British Museum.*

learned that this mound, called Mugheir by the Arabs at the present day, is the site of the ancient city of Ur.

King Ur-Engur probably lived about 2500 B.C., that is, more than three hundred years before Abram's time, so that Ur was an important city,

surrounded by a wall, with a king of its own, long before Abram lived in it. It may be that it became a great city because it worshipped the Moon-god, who was considered to be the greatest and most powerful of all the gods. Many people would go to Ur to worship Nannar in his own sacred city, because they thought that this was most pleasing to him.

In Fig. 5 you see a picture of the Moon-god seated in his shrine. Near his head is the crescent symbol. A priest wearing a flounced robe, probably made of muslin, is leading King Ur-Engur into the presence of the god. The king holds up his right hand, which is bare, in adoration. The writing which you see behind the god is an address by Khashkamer, the owner of the seal, to King Ur-Engur. Khashkamer was the Viceroy or Governor of a city ruled over by King Ur-Engur. This picture is the impression made by the seal being rolled over a wet clay tablet. In those days, every one who could afford it carried a stone seal engraved with his own particular device. It was generally worn tied to the wrist by a cord. Instead of signing his name, a man would roll his seal over the clay, to show that he gave his assent to anything written on the tablet.

Here are some lines from a hymn to the

Moon-god which was sung in the city of Ur :—

"Father, long suffering, and full of forgiveness, whose hand upholds the life of all mankind ! . . .
Firstborn, omnipotent, whose heart is immensity, and there is none who may fathom it ! . . .
In heaven, who is supreme? Thou alone, thou art supreme !
On earth, who is supreme? Thou alone, thou art supreme !
As for thee, thy will is made known in heaven, and the angels bow their faces.
As for thee, thy will is made known upon earth, and the spirits below kiss the ground."*

From this hymn we learn something about the religion of the people of Ur, who were called in Abram's time Chaldees, or, as we generally say, Chaldeans. They thought of their gods as great and powerful beings, who had very kind feelings towards them; who wished them to lead good lives, and did not like their evil deeds. We see that these people also believed in a heaven where the gods lived, in angels, and in spirits both good and evil. The good spirits were called the Cherubim; they were the special protectors of mankind, and were always striving to overcome the evil spirits who desired to do men harm.

* SAYCE, *Social Life among the Assyrians and Babylonians.*

The Cherubim are shown with widespread wings; sometimes they have the body of a man and the head of an eagle, sometimes the head of a man and the body of a bull or a lion, but always they have the protecting wings (Fig. 4). They were placed at the entrance of the city, of the palace, and even of the rooms, because it was hoped that they would prevent the evil demons from entering. The demons were those fearful and evil spirits which were always lurking about in secret places to annoy and injure mankind, and were thought to be so ugly that they fled away in fear at an image of themselves.

Fig. 7 is a picture of the demon of the south-west wind. This was placed at the entrance of a room to frighten away the demon if he thought of coming in. Now why did the Chaldeans think that the south-west wind was a demon? If you look at the map, you will see that the wind coming from the south-west to Chaldea passes over the country round the equator and the desert of Arabia. This makes it always a hot, scorching wind, full of fine grains of sand, very disagreeable for people and harmful to the crops.

And the Chaldeans, not knowing about the equator, believed that an evil spirit sent it. On the other hand, the storm-wind, which brought

showers of rain, and the rivers, which watered the ground, were thought to be sent by the good spirits.

Every misfortune was believed to be the work of the demons. If a man fell ill, surely

FIG. 7.—DEMON OF THE SOUTH-WEST WIND—*British Museum.*

an evil spirit had entered into him. There was a plague demon, who sometimes slept and sometimes raged among the people; there was a demon Headache, who was greatly disliked.

Sometimes the demon could be thrust out by magic words or even prevented from enter-

ing. Little clay tablets with magic spells written on them were worn by people as amulets to frighten the demons away, and many of these have been found among the ruins of the cities.

The Chaldeans were so sure that only magic spells could drive out the evil spirits, that they seldom tried to find a way of healing a sick person by the use of herbs and medicines, so that there were no doctors in Chaldea who studied special diseases.

The evil spirits were thought to be most powerful in the darkness, therefore you can understand how greatly the people who believed this would reverence the sun and moon, which gave them light.

FIG. 8.—SCORPION MEN—*Smith's Chaldean Genesis.*

CHAPTER III

NIMROD, THE MIGHTY HUNTER

"AND Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar" (Genesis x. 8–10).

Here we read of Nimrod ruling over a kingdom in which there were four cities. But we have to remember, when reading the Bible, that just as Israel (the name given later in life to Jacob) represents the nation of the Israelites, so here Nimrod stands for the tribe descended from him, which may have gained dominion over the four cities.

We have no other account of Nimrod, and

nothing more is said about him in the Bible, though we do know that hundreds of years after he lived, Micah, a prophet of Judah, speaks of the country in which these towns were situated as the "land of Nimrod."

He was a "mighty hunter." There were lions, wild bulls, and many other savage animals in Chaldea in those days, and the king who protected his people from these enemies was a benefactor indeed. Years after Nimrod died, men remembered his great hunts, and told their children of his mighty deeds, so that in time, when any one wanted to praise a man greatly, he would say, "Even as Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord." And the Arabs, who live in that country to-day, tell long stories of the great deeds of Nimrod, while two or three large heaps of ruins are called after him.

Nimrod and his tribe chose out a most fertile land where they might settle down, and, as far as we know, they were the first descendants of Noah to build cities. Up to the present just a little has been found out about the four cities which were the beginning of the kingdom of Nimrod.

Twenty-five miles from Ur, on the left bank of the Euphrates, lay the city of Erech. If you set off to walk round the low hills which con-

tain the ruins of that city to-day, you will find that they are six miles in circumference. This

FIG. 9.—DEMONS FIGHTING—*British Museum.*

gives us an idea of its great size and extent in the days of its prosperity.

About fifty years ago, when these hills were

first excavated, they were found to contain an enormous number of graves. For Erech was the special city of Ana, the god of the Lower World, the lord of darkness or death, and, just as the Chaldeans went to Ur to worship the Moon-god, so they brought their dead to be buried at Erech, as they thought this would be most pleasing to Ana. The graves were made on platforms of brick, raised to a great height above the plain, and carefully drained. This made them so dry that, when they were opened more than five thousand years after, many of the articles buried with the dead were in a good state of preservation.

The Chaldeans seem to have placed all the chief possessions of the dead man in his grave, so that they must have believed that there was another life after death.

Wonderful stories are told about a king of Erech, called Gilgamesh. He, like Nimrod, was a great hero and a mighty hunter. Some people have thought that he may have been Nimrod, but nothing has been found to prove this. According to the story, the god Ana sent a mighty bull to destroy Gilgamesh. But the hero and his friend Ea-bani went out to do battle with the bull, slew him, dedicated his horns to the Sun-god, and then held a great banquet. Soon

after this Ea-bani died, and his death was deeply mourned by his friend, who determined to find out the secret of immortal life. The Moon-god helped Gilgamesh by sending him a dream, in which he learned where Sit-na-pish-tim, an ancestor of his, who knew the secret, lived. So he set out for the mountain of the sunset. When he arrived there, he found the gates guarded by the scorpion man and his wife, who at last allowed him to pass through. Then he travelled onward through thick darkness for twenty-four hours, until he arrived at a place where the trees were laden with precious stones instead of fruit. After many dangers Gilgamesh crossed the Waters of Death, and came to the place where Sit-na-pish-tim lived. But Sit-na-pish-tim said he could not do anything to help Gilgamesh escape death, because "as long as houses are built, as long as brethren quarrel, as long as there is hatred in the land, and as long as the waters of the river run into the sea, so long will death come to every man."* Thereupon Gilgamesh asked his ancestor how it was that he had obtained immortal life. Then Sit-na-pish-tim told him that once the gods destroyed all people by a flood, but he alone and his family

* British Museum Guide to Babylonian and Assyrian Antiquities.

were saved in a barge which he built, and which finally rested on a high mountain: when he wanted to know if the waters had gone down, he sent forth a dove, which returned seven days after; then he sent forth a swallow, which also returned; at last he sent a raven, which never came back. Then Sit-na-pish-tim knew that the waters had gone down, so he came forth with all his family and with all the beasts he had had with him, and offered a sacrifice to the gods; after this the gods made him immortal, and he went to live in that far-distant land where Gilgamesh had found him.

The story then goes on to say that Sit-na-pish-tim told Gilgamesh of a plant which prolonged life, and that Gilgamesh found it, but that it was stolen from him by a demon in the form of a serpent. So Gilgamesh went back to his city of Erech, and there he besought the gods one after the other to let him see his friend Ea-bani once more. At last the god Nergal opened the ground, and allowed the spirit of Ea-bani to come forth.

This legend of Gilgamesh, King of Erech, is interesting to us, because the account which Sit-na-pish-tim gives of the Flood is very like that which we read in the Bible, and this makes us think that there was intercourse between the

FIG. 10.—WINGED FIGURE HOLDING AN EAR OF WHEAT AND AN IBIS. FROM THE PALACE OF ASHUR-NASIR-PAL—*British Museum.*

Chaldeans and the Hebrews, for they both had the same stories.

The god Ana was also worshipped at Calneh, a town about sixty miles north-west of Erech, and in time Calneh became the greatest town in Chaldea.

You will notice that the first important city is Ur, because the earliest settlements of the people were near the sea-coast. As the inhabitants of the land increased in number they moved further north, and then Calneh became the chief city. In later times Babel, or Babylon, north of Calneh, was by far the most important town; its fame became so great that the whole district was later called Babylonia after it. Before, however, Babylon gained power another city north of it, called Accad, was ruled over by a king, about whom we shall read in the next chapter.

Accad gave its name to a whole district, for we find the earliest inhabitants of the country spoken of as "The people of Sumer and Accad." Seventy years ago no one knew whereabouts in the wide plains of Chaldea these four cities of the "kingdom of Nimrod" stood.

There was a hill covered with grass called by the Arabs of that district El Kasr, which means the palace.

In 1854 Sir Henry Rawlinson began to excavate this hill, and from inscriptions which were dug up he found that it contained the ruins of the palace of King Nebuchadnezzar, and was indeed the site of ancient Babylon. About the same time Mr. Loftus, another famous explorer, discovered the sites of the cities of Erech, Accad, and Calneh.

FIG. 11.—LIMESTONE STELE OF A KING OF BABYLON SHOWING THE SACRED EMBLEMS—*British Museum*.

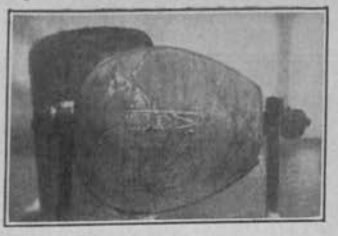

FIG. 12.—MACE-HEAD OF SARGON OF ACCAD—
British Museum.

CHAPTER IV

SARGON OF ACCAD

LONG before Babylon rose to greatness, hundreds of years even before the time of Ur-Engur, King of Ur, there ruled over the city and district of Accad a great king called Sargon.

He was of the Semitic race, and there was a story told about him that, when he was a baby, his mother, who was a princess, wanted to hide him; so she put him in a basket made of rushes, covered it with pitch to keep the water out, and placed it on the Euphrates. The river bore the little ark along, and Akki, the water-carrier, found it. Akki, in the kindness of his heart, took the baby and brought him up, and he became a gardener; but the goddess Ishtar saw him and loved him, and made him king over the land. Whether Sargon

was a usurper or of royal birth we do not know, but his inscriptions tell us that he was a powerful king. In his day the Elamites, who lived in the mountainous district to the east, were often making war on Accad; Sargon fought against them and conquered them. He also fought against the Syrians, the people who lived very far to the north, and he brought back many captives taken in war to his city of Accad. Sargon marched as far west as the Mediterranean, and on the seashore he set up a tablet, that all men might know the extent of land over which he had ranged. In one of his inscriptions he says: "Forty-five years the kingdom I took. The people of the dark races I ruled . . . over difficult countries in chariots of bronze I rode." *

Now this Sargon is thought to have lived about 3800 B.C. And yet you see that even at this time the Accadians had found out how to smelt tin and copper ore, and how to mix them in such proportions as to make bronze, so that the people were already highly civilised.

Sargon was not only a great conqueror. He built both a palace and a temple in his city of Accad. There is a mace-head in the British

* "Records of the Past," vol. v.

Museum which was dedicated to the Sun-god at Sippar by Sargon, King of Accad (Fig. 12).

Sippar was on the Euphrates, just opposite to Accad, and these two cities were sometimes called "the two Sippars," or Sepharvaim, as we read in the Bible.

Sippar was the town devoted to the honour of Shamash, the bright Sun-god. This does not mean that Shamash was not worshipped in other towns. The circle which was his symbol is found in all the cities, for he was wanted everywhere to make the crops grow and flourish.

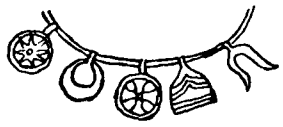

FIG. 13.—SACRED EMBLEMS OF THE SUN AND MOON WORN ON NECKLACE BY ASHUR-NASIR-PAL—*Layard.*

When the sun came up over the horizon in the morning, he seemed to the people as if he were throwing down some mighty barrier. "Sun," they sang "thou art risen from the foundations of heaven, thou hast unfastened the bolts of the shining skies; thou hast opened the door of heaven." *

In Fig. 14 you see the Sun-god sitting in his shrine, which is upheld by a long column. He wears the horned headdress, and holds in his hand a ring and a short rod; below his

* "Records of the Past," vol. xi.

feet are shown in wavy lines the waters of the ocean. Above him is his symbol, together with those of the Moon-god and the planet

FIG. 14.—TABLET OF THE SUN-GOD—*British Museum.*

Venus. On the altar in front of the god is the orb of the sun. Two divine beings seated on the canopy of the sun hold it in position. A priest is leading by the hand a king, who

comes to worship the Sun-god in the city of Sippar. The king's right hand is raised in adoration, and an attendant goddess behind has raised both hands in worship of the god. The priest's head is shaven, for that was the usual custom, but the king and the attendant goddess have long hair.

It was believed that the sun inspired kings with warlike thoughts, so the god was called "the conqueror of the king's enemies." It is possible that the Sun-god may have been the same as the Fire-god, whose worship the Sepharvites, or people of Sippar, introduced at a later time into Samaria.

The planet Venus, whose symbol we saw in the shrine of the Sun-god, was worshipped under the name of Ishtar or Ashtaroth. It was Ishtar, in the legend, who made Sargon king of Accad. She also was thought to put into the hearts of those who prayed to her courage to do great deeds of valour.

The temples of the Chaldeans were not huge buildings of stone like those of Egypt, but were made of seven platforms of brick, built one above the other, and rising to a great height. On the highest platform was the sanctuary, or sacred place of the god, and also an observatory where the priests might

study the heavens. For the Chaldeans were great astronomers. They believed in mighty and powerful gods who did not live on the earth, but in the sky: the sun, the moon, and the stars, all of which they thought had an influence on the lives of men.

Fig. 11 is a photograph of a boundary stone set up by a king of Babylon, on which are the symbols of the sun, the moon, and the planet Venus, and probably other astronomical symbols.

Sargon established a library in his city of Accad, and among the books there was a great work on astronomy and astrology in seventy parts, but unfortunately only the index to it has yet been found. The Chaldean priests spent much time studying the stars, and finding out how they moved in the heavens. They had discovered all those beautiful, bright, wandering worlds called planets, which can be seen with the naked eye. Some stars they grouped together into constellations, to which they gave names. They also noticed that the sun moved through certain of these constellations. Do you remember the nursery rhyme of the Zodiac?

"The Ram, the Bull, the Heavenly Twins,
And, next the Crab, the Lion shines,
The Virgin and the Scales,
The Scorpion, Archer, and the Goat,
The Man that bears the waterpot,
And Fish with glittering tails."

You have all heard of the Zodiac, or group of constellations through which the sun moves, but did you realise that it was the Chaldeans who first discovered these constellations?

As far as we know, they, first of all the people in the world, took delight in the study of the stars.

And did you ever wonder who first divided our year into twelve months, and our days into two periods of twelve hours?

Also the Chaldeans!

They had thirty days in a month, so that there were only three hundred and sixty days in the year; but they knew that this was not quite correct, so every six years they put in an extra month, and in this way they got right again with the sun. It is said that in their calculation of the year they were only two seconds wrong.

It was probably because the Chaldeans studied the heavens so carefully, and found out so much about the movements of the moon, that they

considered the Moon-god more powerful than the Sun-god.

If a great misfortune befell the people at the hands of the good gods, if the sun burnt up the grass or gave a man sunstroke through its great

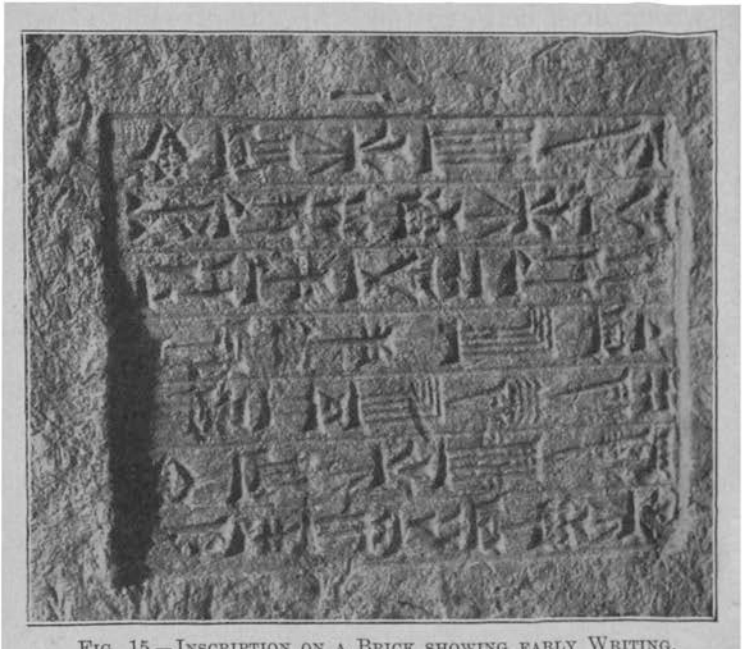

FIG. 15.—INSCRIPTION ON A BRICK SHOWING EARLY WRITING.

heat, then the people thought that the kind god was angry with them on account of something they had done wrong, and that this misfortune was sent as a punishment, so they prayed to

the god to pardon them. Here is a prayer said by a priest as he stood by the side of a king who was very ill:—

"O Sun, to the lifting up of my hands pay attention. . . . May his sin be forgiven him, his wrong deed be forgotten. May his trouble leave him. May he recover from his illness. Give back life to the king."

From this we see that the religion of the Chaldeans taught them that, if they wished to please their gods, they must do what they knew to be right: this idea of the difference between right and wrong, and of a good life being pleasing to the gods, may have been brought into the country and added to the religion of the Sumerians by the Semites, the descendants of Noah.

FIG. 16.—CAST OF STONE SLAB OF KHAMMURABI—*British Museum.*

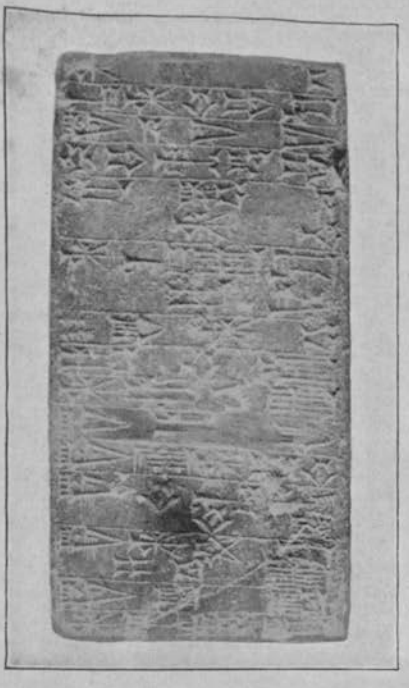

FIG. 17.—LIMESTONE TABLET OF KHAMMURABI, KING OF BABYLON, RECORDING THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN-GOD IN LARSA—*British Museum.*

CHAPTER V

AMRAPHEL, KING OF SHINAR

ALTHOUGH Sargon in his day fought against Elam and conquered it, some hundreds of years later the Elamites gained power in the land of Shinar. In the fourteenth chapter of Genesis we read:—

"And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel

king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations; that these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.

"All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea. Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled."

Notice whom these five kings of Canaan served! It was the King of Elam, who had gained such power over the other kings that they had to go and fight with him whenever he made war. And notice against whom he waged war. The kings of cities in Canaan. Look at the map, and you will find that the Syrian Desert lies between Canaan and the land of Shinar. Chedorlaomer could not lead his armies across the desert, because he would never be able to get sufficient food and water for them, so he had to march right up the Euphrates, enter Canaan on the north, and then proceed southwards to the Dead Sea. A very considerable journey. And when he had conquered the kings of Canaan, so great was his power that they paid him tribute for twelve years.

Further on in the same chapter we read how, when they rebelled, Chedorlaomer came again to Canaan, defeated them, and plundered their cities, carrying off many captives, among whom was Lot, Abraham's nephew. And in the rescue of Lot we realise what a great and important chief Abraham was, when we read that he had three hundred and eighteen servants, born in his own household, who were able to carry arms. But though no inscriptions have yet been found which tell us anything about Abraham, we can learn a great deal about Amraphel, King of Shinar, from the monuments which have quite recently been discovered.

Amraphel is thought to be the same man as Khammurabi, the King of Babylon, who fought against the Elamites, and in time expelled them from the country. He gained great power over the land, and made Babylon his chief city, so that the land of Shinar was called Babylonia. A great number of clay tablets have been found belonging to the time of Khammurabi. Many of them are contracts relating to the purchase or sale of land or houses, or slaves. When a man wanted to buy a house, he employed a scribe to write the deed of sale on a clay tablet. Two of these tablets were generally made, one of which was kept in a safe place, often in the temple.

If any dispute arose, and the matter came before a judge, his decision was always written down on a clay tablet. Khammurabi also caused to be written down the laws and customs that had been followed by the people and the judges from time immemorial. He did not make new laws; he simply had those in general use written down on a great stone slab, so that all men might read them.

In Fig. 16 you see a picture of the sculpture on the slab. It shows the king standing with his right arm bare, and raised in an attitude of worship, to receive the laws from Shamash, the Sun-god.

The god is seated on a throne which represents a shrine or temple. He wears the horned head-dress, which was the symbol of divine power, and that flounced robe in which we often see the Babylonian priests are dressed, and he holds in his right hand the ring and staff, which show his might and sovereignty. Behind his shoulders rise flames of fire, and under his feet are the mountains. There are a number of letters from Khammurabi to his vassal, the Governor of Larsa, which may be the same city as the Ellasar mentioned in the Bible. From these letters we see that Khammurabi insisted on people obeying the laws which he had had written down for them.

In one letter he tells the Governor of Larsa to arrest eight officials who have not done their work, and send them to Babylon; in another, he tells him to send forty-seven shepherds to Babylon, that they may give account of their flocks to the king. In another letter the king says that the claim of a certain man to some lands has been proved by an old deed to be a just one, and therefore these lands are to be given up to him. The king writes to inquire into a charge of bribery, and orders that the bribe is to be confiscated and sent to him. Again, we find the king sending instructions to the governor to prevent certain fishermen from fishing in forbidden water. And there are letters about the clearing out of canals, and the carrying out of work made necessary by the flooding of canals. All of which shows us that Khammurabi took much care to provide for the welfare of his people. Even to-day the fertility of the marshy plains of Babylonia depends almost entirely on drainage and irrigation. Khammurabi had a great canal cut across from the Euphrates to the city of Sippar; from this ran out innumerable branches, which he says, in his inscription, "gave a stream of abundant waters for the people of Sumer and Accad." "In joy and abundance I watched over them,"

says Khammurabi, "and in peaceful dwellings I caused them to dwell."

Fig. 17 shows you a limestone tablet which records the building of a temple to the Sun-god in Larsa, and the clay cones in Fig. 18 give an account of buildings at Sippar, so that Khammurabi was a builder as well as an irrigator. It

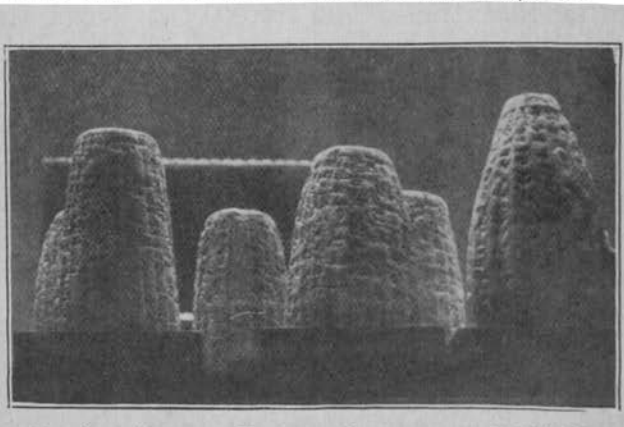

FIG. 18.—CLAY CONES OF REIGN OF KHAMMURABI—*British Museum.*

is thought that this King of Babylon lived about the year 2200 B.C. If this date is correct, then we know the century in which Abraham lived. At the present day you can see long mounds which show the lines of ancient canals; but the country is no longer the abode of fertility and plenty, for the canals are not in working order, and its rulers do not take the trouble to produce

the joy and abundance of which this great king was so proud four thousand years ago.

Is it not a very long time? We are now living in the twentieth century A.D.; that is, twenty hundred years have passed since the year in which our Lord was born. Almost all the history about which you learn has happened during that time; but think of a longer time than that—twenty-two hundred years before the birth of our Lord—then you come to the time when Khammurabi was taking such good care of the welfare of his people, and was building temples to his gods in Babylonia, and when Abraham was living in that new and strange land of Canaan which had been promised to his descendants.

And go to look at those little clay tablets—the very letters of Khammurabi—in the British Museum, and remember that they have lasted all these thousands of years, and that you are looking at what undoubtedly the great king himself handled and stamped with his seal.

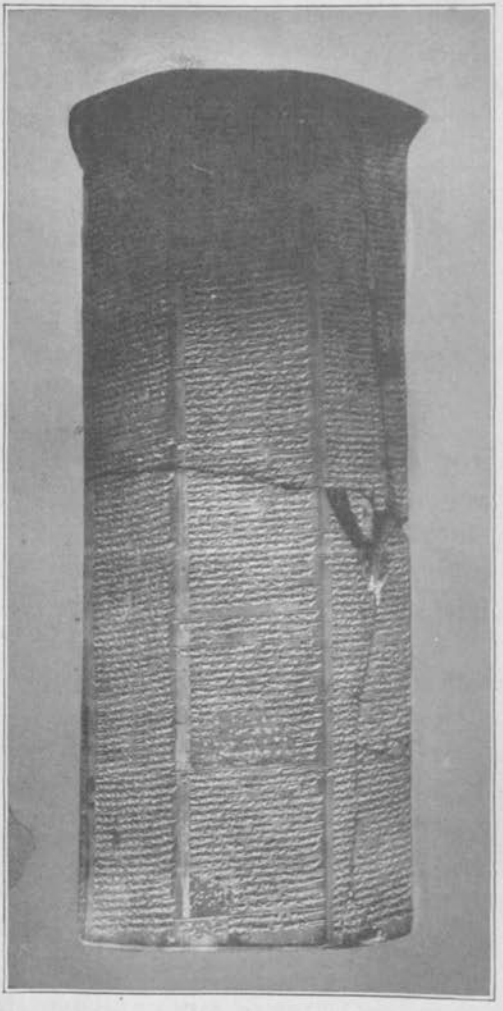

FIG. 19.—CLAY CYLINDER OF TIGLATH-PILESER I.—*British Museum.*

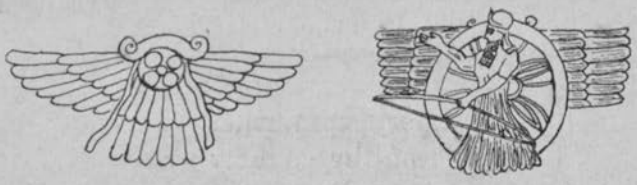

FIG. 20.—EMBLEMS OF ASHUR—*Layard.*

CHAPTER VI

ASSYRIA

IF you turn again to the tenth chapter of Genesis, which is the only written history we possess of the settlements of the people who lived in the early ages of the world, you will read after the account of the cities in the land of Chaldea: "Out of that land (*i.e.*, Chaldea) went forth Ashur, and builded Nineveh, the city Rehoboth, and Calah." Ashur was the son of Shem, and in the Bible he represents the tribe descended from him. This tribe, the Assyrians or people of Ashur, went into the country north of Babylon, the land watered by the Tigris and its tributaries, the eastern Khabour, the Great Zab and the Lesser Zab; and they called this country Assyria, perhaps in honour of their chief god.

In Assyria the land is higher above the sea-level than in Chaldea; there are forests and

low hills which rise into mountain ranges; in most parts the soil is fertile, and, in olden times, the whole of the country was cultivated. For the Assyrians brought with them into their new country all the learning and customs of the Chaldeans.

They worshipped many of the same gods, though their chief god, their special protector, was Ashur. At first, each tribe of the Assyrians was ruled by its chieftain, very much as the Arab tribes to-day are ruled by their sheikhs. The chieftain was also the priest, and offered sacrifices on behalf of the whole tribe to the gods. In time the separate tribes were united, probably under the most powerful of the chieftains, who became king; yet he still kept his priestly office and remained "the high priest of Ashur," and was thought by the people to represent the god on earth.

In this you see the Assyrians differed from the Chaldeans, for we find Ur-Engur, King of Ur, led into the presence of the Moon-god, and the King of Babylon led into the presence of the Sun-god, by the high priest of each god. In Assyria the king himself was the high priest, and therefore was very closely connected with the god.

The god Ashur was the king and father of

the gods; he was the god who "created himself." Fig. 20 shows you his emblem. The upper part has the figure of a man, the lower the feathers of a bird—perhaps the dove which was the sacred bird of the Assyrians. The frame in which the figure stands is a circle, and no doubt represents the sun, while the outspreading wings may be intended to give the idea of the protection which the god gave to his worshippers.

We know very little about the early kings of Assyria. In the Cairo Museum there is a clay tablet, found in Egypt, which is a letter from a king of Assyria in the fifteenth century B.C. to the Pharaoh then ruling in Egypt. In it the King of Assyria says that he is sending to the Pharaoh a present of a chariot, the choicest in his kingdom, with harness and two white horses, also a chariot without harness, and a seal of white marble; but, in return for this present, he would like some gold from the mines which were worked by the Egyptians, and he reminds the Pharaoh that a former king of Assyria, his father, had received a present of gold.

So we see that there was intercourse between Assyria and Egypt, though Egypt was much the more powerful and more highly civilized nation.

At the end of the twelfth century B.C. there

lived a mighty ruler called Tiglath-Pileser, of whose reign a history has actually been found.

On the right bank of the Tigris, north of the place where it receives the waters of the Little Zab, there is a chain of low hills. Above these hills rises a mound, called at the present day Kalah Shergat by the Arabs. Some years ago this mound was excavated, and was found to contain the ruins of the city of Ashur. Under the four corner stones of a temple in this ancient city, four clay cylinders covered with cuneiform writing were dug up. They were about one and a half feet high, and had eight sides. On every cylinder the inscription was found to be the same. Fig. 19 is a photograph of one of these cylinders, which are now in the British Museum.

At that time learned men who had studied the cuneiform writing were not quite sure if they had found out the right way of reading it. So the inscription on these cylinders was copied, and four scholars, each without consulting the others, made a translation of it. Then the translations were compared, and they were found to be so nearly alike as to prove that the method of reading the cuneiform writings was correct.

And what does the writing on these cylinders tell us? It is an account of the first five years

of the reign of Tiglath-Pileser, a king of Assyria, who ruled in Asia more than three thousand years ago. You know that, at the present day, when the foundation-stone of any great building is laid, documents in an air-tight case are placed under it, telling of the circumstances and time when the building was commenced; and, with exactly the same intention, this ruler of Assyria placed his clay books under the foundation-stones of one of his most important buildings, for "the last days, for the day of the future, for after times," as he says at the end of the writing.

You and I live in "the after times," and we can read in Tiglath-Pileser's record what was going on in the world in those far-away ages. The king begins by calling on his gods: "Ashur, the great lord ruling supreme over the gods, the giver of sceptres and crowns; . . . Bel, the lord; Sin, the powerful; Shamash, the establisher of the heavens and the earth, the vanquisher of enemies; Vul, he who causes the tempest to rage over hostile lands and wicked countries; Ishtar, the Queen of Victory, she who arranges battles. Ye great gods ruling over the heavens and the earth, the guardians of the kingdom of Tiglath-Pileser, the Prince inspiring your hearts with joy."*

* "Records of the Past," vol. v.

Then he gives a long account of his wars, first against the people who had previously been conquered by Assyrian kings and had rebelled, and then against the tribes who lived in the mountainous district in the north—a very difficult country to reach, so hilly that the king had to leave his chariot, in which he always rode to battle, and make his way on foot. He went through such steep defiles and over such great heights as no king before him had passed. "In the country of Aruma, which was a difficult land . . . I left the chariots and marched in front of my troops." And then in great triumph he tells us how he destroyed the enemy. "Their fighting men like chaff I scattered . . . I bore away their gods, . . . their wealth I carried off. Their cities I burned with fire, I destroyed and overthrew, and converted into heaps and mounds."

Tiglath-Pileser evidently thinks that in waging these fierce and cruel wars he is doing something which is very pleasing to his god. "My Lord Ashur urged me on," he says, "and I went forth. . . . I fought fiercely . . . their fighting men in the middle of the forests, I scattered like chaff, . . . their bodies filled the valleys and covered the mountain heights." When you read of these terrible massacres, of the stamp-

ing out of peaceful little towns, merely that the Assyrian king might become lord over more land which paid him tribute, you must not think that Tiglath-Pileser was fiercer and more cruel than the rest of the Assyrian kings. On the contrary, from the account which he gives of his rule at home, he seems to have cared greatly for the

FIG. 21.—A TRIBUTE OF HORSES DEPICTED ON THE GATES OF SHALMANESER II.—*British Museum.*

welfare of his people; he restored the temples, he fortified the castles, he wished to improve the trade and agriculture, he introduced new plants, "trees which, in the times of the kings my fathers, no one had planted, I took and planted them in the groves of my country, and I bought fruit trees. . . . Whatever I did not find in my own country I took and planted in the groves of Assyria." *

* Inscription on cylinder of Tiglath-Pileser, translated in "Records of the Past," vol. v.

From this we see that Tiglath-Pileser was a good and wise ruler at home, but, no doubt, in the eyes of his people, his greatest glory lay in his successful wars, and the plunder and spoil which they brought to the Assyrians.

The wars come first in the inscriptions on the cylinder, and we may be quite sure that Tiglath-Pileser considered that they would prove to future ages what a powerful king he was. For the Assyrians were, above all things, soldiers. They liked fighting, and when they were not fighting they were hunting the fiercest wild animals, bulls and lions. Through spending their lives in this way they became brave and reckless in face of danger, very cool and confident in their own skill and daring, but also fiercely cruel, proud, and haughty with the people whom they conquered in battle. No other race in the world inflicted such terrible punishments on its enemies.

Even when Tiglath-Pileser was on his wars he found time to hunt. He tells us that he killed four wild bulls in the desert, and carried the skins and horns home as trophies to his city of Ashur, together with the hides and tusks of ten elephants. He also killed eight hundred lions, and for all his exploits he gives great thanks to Nineb and Nergal, the gods of war and hunting.

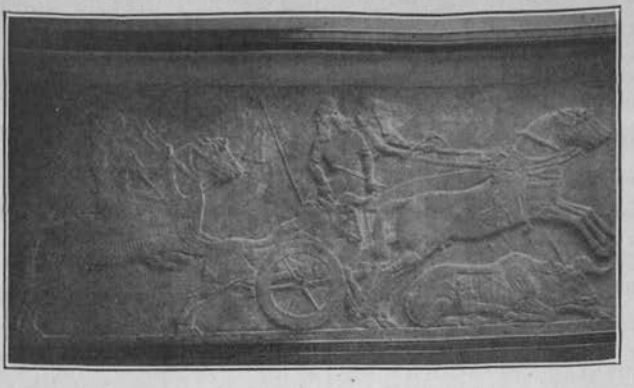

FIG. 22.—BULL HUNT—*British Museum.*

CHAPTER VII

CALAH

IF you travel down the Tigris from Mosul, which is the Turkish capital of Mesopotamia at the present day, you will see a high mound on the left bank of the river, just before it receives its greatest tributary, the Zab. This mound is called Nimroud by the Arabs who live in the district.

More than two thousand years ago a Greek general encamped with his army near this place, and he writes about it as being at that time the ruins of an ancient city.

In 1840 a young Englishman, called Henry Layard, when travelling through the country,

passed the mound of Nimroud and examined it. He wanted to explore it and find out what secrets were hidden within its covering of earth. But it costs a great deal of money to pay Arabs for several weeks to dig deep trenches into the earth and to clear away the soil, and no one in England seemed interested enough in this work to give subscriptions for it. However, in 1845 Sir Stratford Canning, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, offered to assist in paying the expenses of the excavation. Immediately Layard set off, and travelling by the nearest route, he tells us that he "galloped over the vast plains of Assyria and reached Mosul in twelve days." Layard has written some most interesting books giving an account of his discoveries, and of the kind of life he led while exploring the buried cities of Assyria. He had many difficulties; the ignorant Turks who governed the district put hindrances in his way; the climate was almost unbearably hot in summer for a European, and there was danger of fever; but his great determination to carry out the work he had set himself to do overcame every obstacle, and in the British Museum to-day you can see the wonderful results of his labours.

For the mound of Nimroud contained the remains of Calah, a city founded by a king who

FIG. 23.—STATUE OF ASHUR-NASIR-PAL—*British Museum.*

lived before Tiglath-Pileser, and made powerful by another king who lived two hundred years after him.

From the buried city of Ashur we learned about the reign of Tiglath-Pileser, who lived at the end of the twelfth century B.C. From the mound of Nimroud we have an account of the life of a king who lived at the beginning of the ninth century B.C. This was Ashur-nasir-pal, whose name meant "Ashur protects the son."

We know very little about the kings who lived in the time between the reigns of Tiglath-Pileser and Ashur-nasir-pal. The power of Assyria depended almost entirely on its king. If he was a good general, he was able, in his own reign, to conquer the surrounding nations and build up a great empire. On the other hand, if a warrior-king was succeeded by one who might be quite a good ruler, but no soldier, then the conquered kingdoms promptly refused tribute, and the empire became again very small. This may have been the case during the two hundred years following the reign of Tiglath-Pileser. In the eleventh century B.C. lived that great hero, David of Judah. During his reign and that of Solomon his son, the kingdom of the Israelites was at the height of its power. When, on the death of Solomon, the nation was divided, and the two parts

were bitter enemies of each other, the Israelites lost their influence, and never regained it.

It was Ashur-nasir-pal who first made Calah a royal city. Just as the Chaldeans built their

FIG. 23A.—WINGED LION FROM THE PALACE OF ASHUR-NASIR-PAL—*British Museum.*

first city at Ur, near the coast, and gradually moved northward to Erech, Calneh, and finally to Babylon, so the Assyrians moved their seat of government from Ashur to Calah, and later

still to Nineveh. At Calah, Ashur-nasir-pal built a magnificent palace adorned with beautiful sculpture.

Though the Assyrians lived in a country where there were hills and plenty of good building-stone, they still raised their palaces on great mounds of sun-dried brick, and built them chiefly of brick, following the custom of their ancestors in the land of Chaldea.

In this new palace of Ashur-nasir-pal in the city of Calah the inside walls of the rooms were lined with slabs of stone, on which were carved, in beautiful low-relief, pictures showing the mighty deeds of the king. These slabs of stone were found by Henry Layard in the mound of Nimroud. They had been preserved for centuries by the bricks forming the walls of the palace, which had crumbled in the course of ages back to the original clay of which they were made.

In the Nimroud Gallery of the British Museum you can see these sculptures arranged in the order in which they stood in the palace at Calah.

Fig. 23 is a statue of the king, which was found in a small temple, dedicated to the War-god and situated close to the palace. It probably represents him in his sacrificial robes as the chief priest of the god. He holds a sceptre in

one hand and an instrument like a sickle in the other. He wears a tightly fitting fringed dress with a knotted girdle. The inscription on the breast is as follows: "The conqueror from the upper passage of the Tigris to Lebanon and the Great Sea, who all countries, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, has reduced under his authority." This is the only perfect statue of an Assyrian king which has yet been discovered. In this kind of carving the Assyrians were not so clever as the Babylonians and Egyptians, who made very fine statues of their kings.

Fig. 24 is a picture of the king seated on a stool with rams' heads carved at either end. He wears a dress decorated with fringe, and heavy earrings and bracelets. From his high tiara hangs a ribbon, also fringed, and his hair and beard are arranged in elaborate curls. The Assyrians seem to have had thick, black, curly hair and long beards, in which they took great pride. The king wears sandals that have a protection for the heel and fasten across the front with a strap, which passes between the big toe and the second. They are very similar to those worn by the people who live in Mesopotamia at the present day. Behind the king stands an attendant, holding his bow and quiver

of arrows in one hand, and, in the other, a flapper to keep the flies away from his master.

FIG. 24.—KING SEATED WITH ATTENDANT—*British Museum.*

In Fig. 22 you see the king hunting the wild bull, a very fierce and powerful animal which inhabited Assyria and the country round. One

bull has already been shot, and it lies wounded almost under the horses' feet. The other has evidently attacked the chariot, and the king is stabbing it with his sword. The chariot is drawn by three horses, wearing harness which is highly decorated with rosettes and tassels.

FIG. 25.—LION HUNT—*British Museum.*

In Fig. 25 you see a lion hunt. The king is almost in as dangerous a position as in the bull hunt. The charioteer is urging on his three horses, and the chariot seems just to have escaped the full spring of the attacking lion, whose mouth is open in a tremendous roar.

The king has his bow stretched out to shoot, while the attendants behind hold their swords drawn and their shields ready, in case the arrow should not reach its mark. Do you notice that the lion has a claw at the end of his tail? This is a peculiarity of the Asiatic lions, and shows how faithfully the sculptor copied his models.

These pictures give us a good idea of the difficulties and dangers of hunting in the deserts and forests of Assyria, and, no doubt, they gave Ashur-nasir-pal great satisfaction by recalling to his mind his mighty exploits in the chase.

Each separate slab of stone makes one complete picture, and you will find that the animals and men are so carefully arranged that the central figure of each group is always the king.

When these sculptures were brought to England about seventy years ago, they were a revelation to people in Europe, for nobody had any idea that the men of the ancient world were able to carve so beautifully in stone.

From the account given us in the Bible of Solomon's temple, we know that carving was much used as a decoration for important buildings, but unfortunately no trace of Solomon's temple remains. Yet the sculptures from Calah may serve to remind us of the "carved figures of

cherubim and palm-trees and open flowers" overlaid with pure gold, about which we read in the Books of Kings.

But Ashir-nasir-pal did not spend all his time hunting. Like other kings, he leaves the annals of his reign, where he relates his wars in rather a boastful manner. He calls himself a lion and a hero, and speaks of his expeditions to the land of Nairi; of how he fought against the Hittites and the Syrians as far sea Lebanon, and carried his arms to the great sea; of how he made the Phœnicians pay him tribute, and took from them "gold, silver, and copper, linen and woollen garments, and strong timber"; and of how in the south he filled the land Chaldea with terror. A great number of his campaigns seem to have been against that mountainous district north of Nineveh watered by the River Tigris. It is called the land of Nairi, but it was inhabited by many different tribes of people. The inhabitants, when attacked, often took to the hills, and it was very difficult for the Assyrians in their chariots to follow them.

Fig. 26 shows the king in his chariot shooting at the enemy, who seem to be making a desperate resistance. Above the king is a symbol of the god Ashur, also with his outstretched bow fighting for his followers.

FIG. 26.

Upper row: ASSYRIANS FIGHTING AGAINST AN ENEMY.
Lower row: ASSYRIANS CROSSING A RIVER—*British Museum.*

In Fig. 27 you see the king and his army crossing the river. The horses, held by the reins, are swimming behind. In Fig. 26 the soldiers are supporting themselves by inflated skins, which hold them up like a lifebuoy. This method of swimming is still used by the Arabs living on the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris at the present day.

Ashur-nasir-pal also made war in the fertile district of the north-west. Here there were a number of important trading cities on the caravan route between Assyria and Asia Minor. The Assyrian army attacked Carchemish, the most powerful of the Hittite cities, and forced its king to pay tribute.

From Carchemish Ashur-nasir-pal marched westward across the Orontes, until he arrived at the shores of the great sea, where the rich Phœnician cities of Tyre and Sidon were situated. They brought splendid presents to this mighty conqueror, for the Phœnicians never liked fighting and would always rather pay money than go to war.

From his own account Ashur-nasir-pal seems to have been one of the cruellest of the Assyrian kings. When he captured a city he carried off all the movable goods, and then burnt it.

His usual custom of treating his enemies was

FIG. 27.—ASHUR-NASIR-PAL CROSSING A RIVER—*Layard.*

to flay them alive or impale them on stakes, and such horrible practices are figured on his palace walls. He burnt in the fire the boys and girls whom he took captive.

Having amassed treasures, and having struck terror into the hearts of his enemies, the king settled down in his favourite city of Calah, and

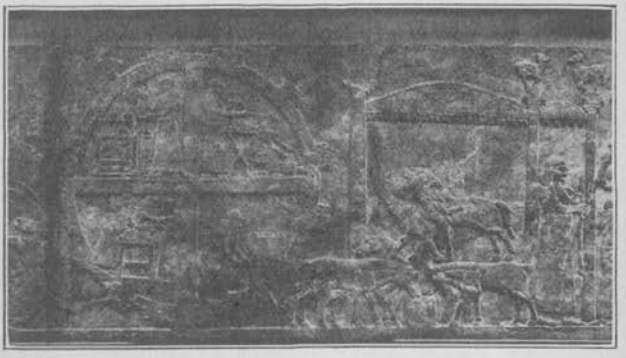

FIG. 28.—ASSYRIAN CAMP (GROOMING HORSES, ETC.)
—*British Museum.*

there he employed those captives whose lives he had spared in rebuilding Calah. It was entirely in ruins when Ashur-nasir-pal ascended the throne, and by the end of his reign it was a large city five miles in circumference, with a mighty palace, towering above all the other houses, for it was raised on a high mound six hundred yards long.

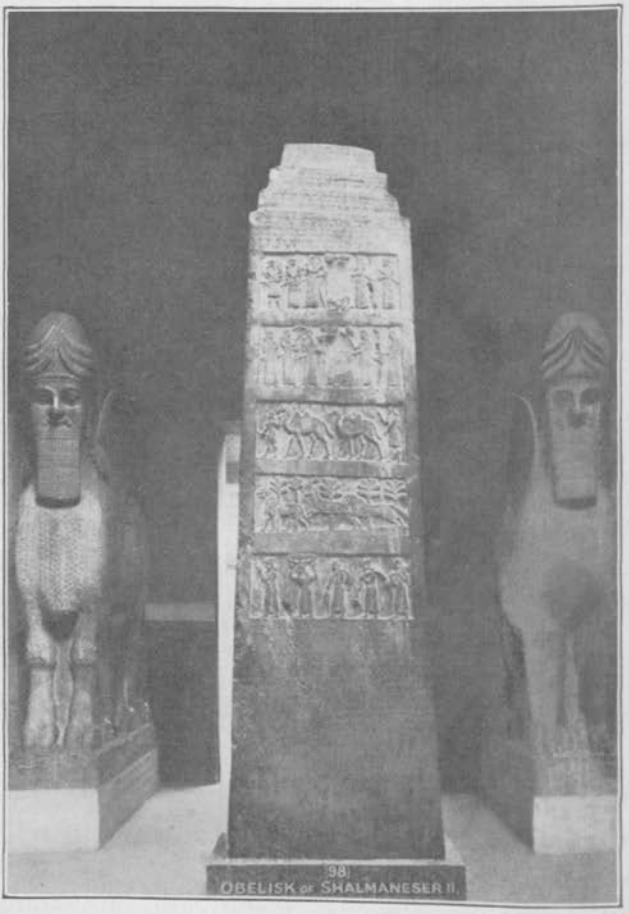

FIG. 29.—THE BLACK OBELISK—*British Museum.*

FIG. 30.—SECOND ROW OF THE BLACK OBELISK, SHOWING ISRAELITES PAYING HOMAGE—*Layard.*

CHAPTER VIII

THE BLACK OBELISK

WHEN Layard was excavating the mound of Nimroud, his workmen dug up an obelisk of black marble, which was covered with sculptures and writing (Fig. 29).

This was a trophy of victory set up by Shalmaneser II., the son of Ashur-nasir-pal.

The long inscription at the base of the obelisk gives an account of his wars, and the sculptures show the conquered princes paying homage and bringing tribute to the king. Thus we know that Shalmaneser was another of the great conquering kings of the Assyrians, and he fought chiefly against the nations who lived to the east: the Hittites, the Syrians, the Israelites, and the roving Arab tribes of the desert.

His first attack was on the Syrians and Hittites living near the Euphrates. He defeated them, and made them pay him tribute. Now the King of Israel had up to this time been an enemy of the King of Syria, but fearing the invasion of a much more powerful foe, he made friends with him, and an alliance was formed between Ahab of Israel, Benhadad of Syria, and the Kings of Hamath and Ammon. They went out to meet the King of Assyria and did not wait for him to attack them, because they wanted to keep him away from their lands. The prophet Joel, who lived about this time, speaks of "a great people and a strong," and of the havoc they wrought to any country they invaded: "the land is as the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness" (Joel ii. 3).

The allies met Shalmaneser near the River Orontes, and there the battle of Karkar was fought. Shalmaneser says in one of his inscriptions that he thundered down on his enemies like the god Raman (that is, the god of thunder), and that with the help of Ashur, the great lord, he defeated them, yet he mentions no tribute, which means perhaps that the victory was very uncertain, and there is no further expedition to Israel or Syria for five years.

We learn nothing from the Bible about these wars with Assyria, but Shalmaneser's inscriptions explain to us the sudden friendship between Syria and Israel. As soon as the fear of the Assyrian invasion was removed, Ahab united with Jehoshaphat of Judah against Ben-hadad, and a war broke out in which Ahab was slain.

Twice again Shalmaneser went to war against Syria, and each time he was met by Ben-hadad and his allies. But the third time Shalmaneser came he was allowed to enter the Syrian territory: for the old king Ben-hadad was dead, murdered, as we read in the Bible, by his servant Hazael, who made himself king.

Another inscription tells us of Shalmaneser's war with Hazael. Reading it, we realise why Ben-hadad strove so earnestly to prevent the Assyrians invading his country. "In the eighteenth year of my reign," says Shalmaneser, "for the sixteenth time I crossed the Euphrates. . . . Hazael of Damascus trusted to the strength of his armies and mustered his troops in full force. I fought with him, his defeat I accomplished, . . . to save his life he retreated; I pursued him; in Dámascus, his royal city, I shut him up. His plantations I cut down. Cities without number I threw down,

dug up, burnt with fire. Their spoil beyond count I carried away." No wonder Ben-hadad made alliances, and resolutely strove to keep this terrible enemy from his country.

Ahab's son was slain by Jehu, the captain of the host, who made himself king. Jehu was a good soldier and a strong ruler, but the little kingdom of Israel was no match for the great empire of Assyria. It may be that Shalmaneser had not forgotten the help the Israelites gave Ben-hadad. At all events, we find, on the Black Obelisk, Jehu, along with other kings, bringing tribute to the King of Assyria. There are five rows of sculpture running round the obelisk, and the writing underneath each row tells us that the carvings represent the tribute paid by subject nations to the Assyrian king.

The inscription under the second row is as follows: "Tribute of Jehu son of Omri, silver, gold, golden bowls, golden vessels, golden goblets, golden pitchers, lead, sceptres for the hand of the king, staves, I received."* The figure in the second row of sculptures, kneeling down to pay tribute, is thought by some scholars to be Jehu himself; if this is so, then we know that the king is not exaggerating when he says in his inscriptions that the princes

* "Records of the Past," vol. v.

kissed his feet, and it may be that this was the method of paying homage.

The king holds in one hand what looks like a bowl of wine, the other hand rests on his sword. Behind him stands an attendant holding the umbrella over him, and in front another attendant holds the fly-flapper. Near the king is the emblem of Ashur and of Shamash, the Sun-god. In the top row of sculptures also, we see the king with the emblems of his gods. This time he holds a bow and arrow in his hands, and he is attended by two warriors whom you can distinguish by their long beards; the servants or attendants of the king are always clean shaven.

In the third row we see the two-humped, or Bactrian camels, brought as tribute. The kings of Assyria seem to have been very fond of rare and peculiar animals that did not live in Assyria. On the other three sides of this obelisk are represented four different kinds of monkeys, the rhinoceros, the large Indian antelope, and the Indian elephant.

In the fourth row we see a lion hunting a stag among trees. This was probably carved to show the kind of country from which the tribute came.

The tribute of this particular country was,

besides the silver and gold, coloured apparel, garments, and ivory.

The tribute which the men are carrying in the fifth row consists of vessels of copper, silver, gold, lead, copper, ivory, and a rare kind of wood, logs of which the last figure in the row seems to hold in his arms.

In the British Museum, on either side of this obelisk is a winged bull or a winged lion, which you see in the photograph; these do not belong to the time of Shalmaneser. They stood in the palace of his father, Ashur-nasir-pal.

THE GATES OF SHALMANESER II.

Shalmaneser set up at a place on the Tigris, which is now called Kurkh, a stone slab, or stele, on which, besides a figure of the king, there is a long inscription, giving an account of his wars. He proclaims himself: "Shalmaneser, king of the multitudes of men, the Prince, the servant of Ashur, the powerful king, King of Assyria, king of all the four races . . . the high-priest of Ashur, the glorious, the ruler of roads and lord of streets, the trampler on the heads of mountains and all forests, receiver of the tribute and riches of all these lands . . . the son of Ashur-nasir-pal . . . who laid his yoke on hostile lands

and swept them like a whirlwind." Then he relates his victories; again and again, of one people after another, we read: "The city I besieged, I took. Its numerous fighting-men I slew. Its spoil I carried away. A pyramid of heads over against that city I built up; the sons and daughters of their nobles in the fire I burned." Then follows the tribute, which varies according to the productions of the conquered country. From one it is, "horses trained to the yoke, oxen, sheep, goats, I received"; from another, "horses, oxen, sheep, goats, two camels, which have two humps, I received." From a king of the Hittites the tribute was heavy: "$\frac{1}{3}$ talent of gold, $1\frac{1}{6}$ talents of silver, 30 talents of bronze, 100 talents of iron, 20 talents of white and purple cloth, 5 thrones, his daughter with gifts and 100 of his nobles' daughters, 500 oxen, and 5,000 sheep I received." * This stele is now in the British Museum, where there is also another most interesting monument of Shalmaneser II. These are bronze bands which were originally fixed across wooden gates; the wood has perished, but the bronze is still wonderfully preserved. They were found at a place called, at the present day, Tel Balawat. On these narrow bands are hammered out, in what we call repoussé work, scenes from the wars of

* "Records of the Past," vol. iii.

Shalmaneser, which explain, in almost every detail, the account given in the inscription. Look at the lower row of Fig. 31. Here we see the "two camels with two humps," together

FIG. 31.—FROM THE BRONZE BANDS ON SHALMANESER'S GATES.

Upper row: Assyrians attacking the enemy.
Lower row: Enemy bringing tribute.

with the oxen, being brought by the King of Gozan as tribute.

In Fig. 32 you see the Assyrians attacking a fortress, from which the flames are issuing forth. The curious network at the base of the fortress

shows that it was situated in a mountainous country. In the rosettes along the border of each band you can see the holes for the nails that fixed the bronze on to the wooden gates.

In the inscription Shalmaneser says: "To the sea* of the land of Nairi I descended. My

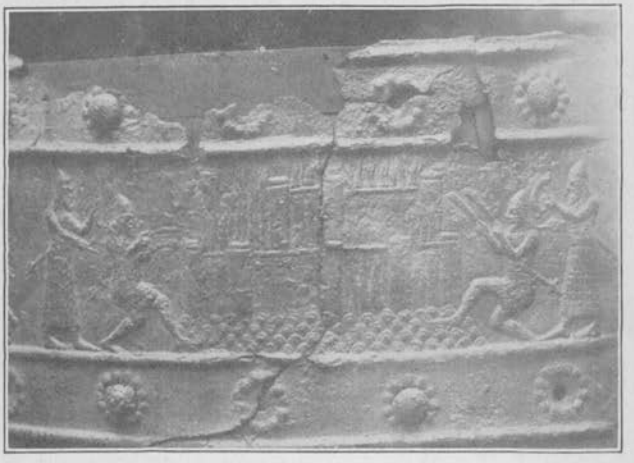

FIG. 32.—ASSYRIANS SETTING FIRE TO A FORTRESS.
(*From the Bronze Bands on Shalmaneser's Gates.*)

weapons by the seaside I stayed. Sacrifices to my gods I performed. At that time an image of my person I made." In Fig. 33 you see the sculptors carving out an image of the king on the rock. The river-gods are shown rising out of

* Lake Van.

the water, and the country is the mountainous district where the Tigris rises. In the upper row is shown the sacrifice to the gods of the district.

In Fig. 34 you see a photograph of a stone

FIG. 33.—BRONZE BAND FROM THE GATES OF SHALMANESER.

Showing the march to the sources of the Tigris, carving of an image of the king upon a rock, and the sacrifice of victims to the river gods.

image similar to those King Shalmaneser was so fond of setting up in the countries which he conquered. We call such a monument a "stele"; the one shown is that of the son of Shalmaneser.

In the upper row of Fig. 35 we see the con-

quered princes paying homage to the king, who wears his swords and holds his bow. Some are

FIG. 34.—STELE OF SHAMSHI-RAMMAN, SON OF SHALMANESER II.—*British Museum.*

standing, holding their hands clasped in an attitude of submission.

FIG. 35.—FROM THE BRONZE BANDS OF SHALMANESER'S GATES.

Upper row: Enemy paying homage and bringing tribute.
Lower row: An Assyrian army marching by the banks of a river.

In the lower row the Assyrian army is marching along the bank of a river; first come the chariots, then the horsemen, and lastly the footmen. The horsemen at this period ride their horses seated with their knees high in a very curious manner, quite unlike the way we are

FIG. 36.—AN ARMY CROSSING A RIVER ON A BRIDGE OF BOATS. (*From the Gates of Shalmaneser II.*)

accustomed to ride. They are shown riding in the same way in Ashur-nasir-pal's sculptures.

In Fig. 36 you see the army crossing the Euphrates by a bridge of boats; these boats were probably made of wickerwork and covered with skins, and it may be such a crossing as this

to which Shalmaneser refers when he says: "In vessels of hardened skin for the second time the Euphrates in its upper part I crossed. . . ." We will end this chapter with a quotation from Shalmaneser's inscription, in which he mentions some names we know: "The city of Karkar I threw down, dug up, burned with fire. 1,200 chariots, 1,200 magazines, 20,000 men of Benhadad of Damascus, 700 chariots, 700 magazines, 10,000 men of Irkhuleni of Hamath, 2,000 chariots, 10,000 men of Ahab of the country of the Israelites . . . to make war and battle against me had come. Through the high powers which Ashur the Lord gave me, through the mighty weapons which Nergal furnished, with them I fought . . . 14,000 men of their troops with weapons I slew. Like the Air-god over them a deluge I poured. . . . All their hosts with weapons I laid low. . . . In the midst of this battle their chariots, their magazines, their horses trained to the yoke I took away from them." *

* "Records of the Past," vol. iii.

FIG. 37.—CAPTIVES RESTING—*Layard.*

CHAPTER IX

THE LOST TEN TRIBES OF ISRAEL

IN the eighth century B.C., about fifty years after the submission of Jehu to the Assyrian king, there lived in Tekoa a herdsman named Amos, who earned his living by cultivating sycamore-trees, and by looking after his herds of cattle and his sheep, which were of a very small breed, and much prized for their wool.

And the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Go prophesy to my people Israel." So Amos went to Bethel, where the golden calf was worshipped.

At that time the Israelites were ruled by Jeroboam II., a great and successful monarch, who had recovered all the cities which had been taken by the Syrians, and had made the boundaries of Israel as wide as they were in the days of Solomon.

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But as the Israelites grew rich and prosperous they also became luxurious and wicked. Amos came to tell them that unless they "hate the evil and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate," unless they leave off oppressing

FIG. 38.—DEMON AND ASSYRIAN WARRIOR.

the poor and worshipping the false gods, they will be punished by being sent into captivity beyond Damascus.

The Israelites were very angry at these words, and Amaziah their priest told Amos to go home and prophesy in Judah, but Amos

answered that he had been sent by God to warn Israel.

A little later than this, Hosea, a prophet of Israel, earnestly entreated his countrymen to repent, and to worship no longer their false gods. "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God," he says; "for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously. . . . Ashur shall not save us; . . . neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods" (Hosea xiv. 1–3). From this passage we see that Ashur, the great god of Assyria, was known in Israel. In reproving the Israelites, Hosea says, "They do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt."

If we read the history of Assyria as it is told us by scholars who have translated the cuneiform inscriptions, we can understand Hosea's meaning. For in the days of Amos and Hosea a very powerful monarch was ruling in Assyria. He was a usurper named Pul. When he came to the throne all the nations around had revolted against Assyria, and were ready to make war. Pul was a good general, and in a few years, through his success in battle, he had established

himself firmly on the throne, and made these nations subject to him. He conquered Babylon, where he proclaimed himself King of Sumer and Accad, while in Assyria he took the name of Tiglath-Pileser, probably after the great conqueror of that name, who lived in the twelfth century B.C.

But this Tiglath-Pileser III. ruled quite differently from the kings who had gone before him. In former times a powerful Assyrian ruler would conquer a country, and order it to pay tribute. On his death, if he was succeeded by an unwarlike king, the tribute was refused, thus the same country had to be conquered again and again; therefore the Assyrian Empire was sometimes a large one and sometimes quite small. But Tiglath-Pileser III. divided the Empire into provinces, over each of which he put a governor, who had a garrison of soldiers to check any rebellion. From each province a fixed tribute had to be paid into the royal treasury. No king of Assyria had ever quite known the boundaries of his empire, but Tiglath-Pileser did, and when he conquered a new country he writes on his inscriptions that he added it "to the boundaries of Ashur." Under his rule Assyria became again a powerful nation; indeed, Tiglath-Pileser aimed at making

it the chief State in Asia, to which other kings paid tribute; thus you see Assyria was at this time very dangerous to the smaller kingdoms.

The Assyrians were great traders. They made good roads, along which the caravans of merchants were continually passing to and fro, and they wanted to get all the trade to Western Asia into their hands.

But up to this time the Egyptians had been the chief merchants in Asia Minor and Palestine, and they were now looked upon by the Assyrians as their rivals in trade.

In the map of Assyria you will see that the caravan route from Egypt to Syria and Asia Minor passed along the sea coast of Palestine through the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. If the Assyrians went to make war on Egypt, they could be attacked and prevented from returning to their own land by the men of Judah and Israel, therefore Assyria could not attack Egypt, nor Egypt Assyria, unless Palestine was first occupied. And we find that at this time there were two parties, both in Israel and Judah, one, wishing to make a firm friendship with Egypt to fight against Assyria, and the other, favouring submission to Assyria, with the payment of tribute. Now do you see what Hosea means when he

speaks of a "covenant with the Assyrians" and oil (for a present) being carried into Egypt; and, again, when he likens Ephraim (that is, the Israelites) to a silly dove without heart, "they (the one party) call to Egypt—they (the other party) go to Assyria"? These two parties in the kingdom of Israel began to quarrel after the death of Jeroboam II., and his son was murdered, after ruling six months, by Shallum, of whom we know very little. Perhaps he was put on the throne by the party favouring alliance with Egypt.

After a month's rule Shallum was overthrown by Menahem, who favoured submission to Assyria. We are told in the Second Book of Kings that, when the King of Assyria, who is called by his original name Pul, came up against the land, Menahem gave him an enormous present to gain his support: also during his reign and that of his son Pekahiah, Israel paid tribute to Assyria. But we can quite understand that there would be many Israelites who hated the idea of being subject to Assyria, and these formed what we might call a national party. One of their number, Pekah, a captain in the army, conspired against the king, slew him in Samaria, then himself ascended the throne. Of course, Pekah

refused the Assyrian tribute, and knowing that the vengeance of the great king would presently fall on him, he began looking about for allies to help him to resist.

Rezon, King of Syria, joined him, but all to no purpose. Down came the hosts of Assyria, first upon Rezon, who was defeated in battle, and shut up in his city of Damascus "like a bird in a cage." Tiglath-Pileser left part of his army to besiege Damascus, and all the beautiful trees round the city were cut down, while he passed on to attack Israel. In 2 Kings xv. 29 we read the result: "In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria." Here we see the custom of the Assyrians in dealing with a conquered country. They made a number of the people leave their homes and settle in another part of the empire, so far away from their native land that there was no hope of ever returning to it. In time these conquered races inter-married with the people of the land, and their children grew up Assyrian citizens. One of Tiglath-Pileser's inscriptions confirms what we read in the Second Book of Kings: "The

land of Beth-Omri, the population, . . . the goods of its people . . . to the land of Assyria I sent. Pekah, their king, they had slain. Hoshea to the kingdom over them I appointed. Ten talents of gold, one thousand of silver, I received from them as tribute, and to the land of Assyria I sent." *

Only a small number of the Israelites were carried away at this time into captivity by Tiglath-Pileser; but a few years later, in the reign of Shalmaneser, his successor, we find that Hoshea, who had succeeded Pekah as king of Israel, also refused tribute. "The king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison" (2 Kings xvii. 4). Samaria was again besieged. Evidently the Israelites had prepared for war, for they held out in Samaria three years, during which time Shalmaneser died, and his successor Sargon is the king referred to in 2 Kings xvii. 6, who "took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the

* "Records of the Past," vol. v.

cities of the Medes." Habor is the same as Khabour, the river which rises in the district of Gozan and flows into the Tigris. Many more of the inhabitants were now carried away. In the great inscription, which was found in Sargon's palace, the king says: "I besieged and occupied the town of Samaria, and took 27,280 of its inhabitants captive. I took

FIG. 39.

SPEARMAN WEARING ARMOUR —*Layard.* ASSYRIAN SPEARMAN.

from them fifty chariots; but left them the rest of their belongings. I placed my lieutenants over them. I renewed the obligation imposed upon them by one of the kings who preceded me." *

But the King of Assyria did not wish the land of Israel to become waste and desolate, for then

* "Records of the Past," vol. ix.

it could pay no tribute; so we find that he "brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof" (2 Kings xvii. 24).

These people who came to live in the land of Israel (which they called Samaria from the name of the chief city), brought with them their own gods. They found that Samaria was overrun with lions, and they thought it was because Jehovah, the God Whom the Israelites worshipped and Who these heathen people believed lived in the land, was angry with them; so they begged the King of Assyria to send them one of the priests of Israel to teach them the worship of Jehovah. "Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land" (2 Kings xvii. 27).

Thus it came about that these new people, who are always called Samaritans, feared the Lord; but they also served the graven images of their false gods, and therefore they did not keep the commandment of the Lord. That is

why the Jews, who lived north and south, would never mix with them, and hundreds of years afterwards, when our Lord was living on the earth, the woman of Samaria was astonished because He spoke to her; for she said, "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."

The ten tribes of Israel who were taken into captivity never came back to their own country. They gradually intermarried with the people among whom they lived, and lost their separate existence as a nation. That is why we speak of them as "The Lost Ten Tribes of Israel."

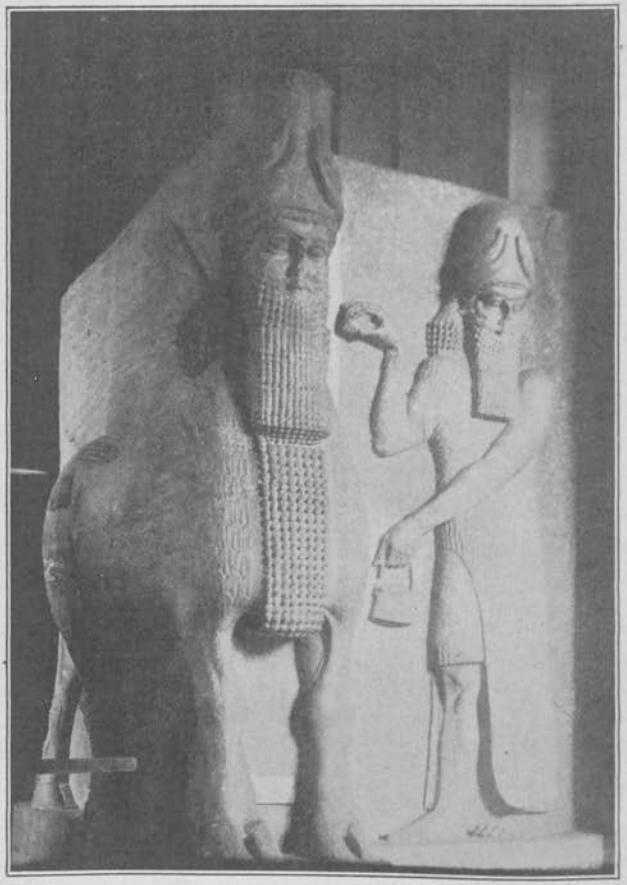

FIG. 40.—WINGED BULL—*British Museum.*

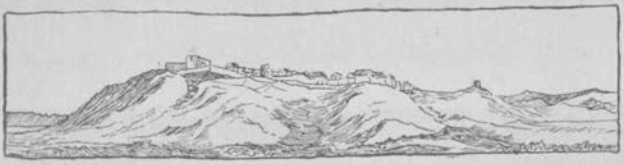

FIG. 41.—MOUND AND VILLAGE OF KHORSABAD BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THE EXCAVATIONS—*Botta.*

CHAPTER X

THE ROYAL CITY OF SARGON

SARGON, that king of Assyria who took Samaria and carried away the Israelites into captivity, was continually fighting with one or another of the nations living on the boundaries of his dominions. And, as the years went on, each bringing victory and power to the empire, Sargon wished to erect a memorial of his conquests, so that, both in his lifetime and after his death, all men might know what a great ruler he had been. Therefore he decided to build himself a new palace, on the walls of which his sculptors would carve pictures of his victorious campaigns.

But Sargon was not content with merely building a palace as other kings before him had

done. He would also found a new city to celebrate his glory alone.

This was a serious undertaking.

The Assyrians believed that both the good and the evil spirits lived in the earth; so the

FIG. 42.—TABLET SHOWING THE SALE OF CERTAIN PROPERTY FOR ONE MANEH OF SILVER—*Photo, Mansell.*

king had to consider most carefully the position of his city, lest he should offend the good spirits, in which case the city would always be unlucky.

Sargon gives an account of the building of

the palace in an inscription on one of the winged bulls, found, long years after, in its ruins.

"Then above the valley which is at the foot of the mountains, to replace Nineveh I founded a town, and I gave it the name of Dur-Sarkin" (*i.e.*, the fort of Sargon). "In the depth of my heart I have resolved peopling this city, erecting altars, the footstools of the great gods, and palaces, the abodes of royalty. On the propitious day of the happy month—the month of Sivan—on the day *ap ap*, I measured the ground, and I moulded bricks."

A little village stood on the spot which Sargon had chosen for the site of his new city; the clay tablets were therefore consulted to find out the value of the land belonging to the people who lived in the village, so that the king might pay them the full amount. But Sargon must not only propitiate the gods by doing justice to the owners of the land; he must also make the city itself so pleasing to them, that they would be willing to come and live in it, and protect the people.

The bricks were made only in the month sacred to the Moon-god, the special protector of buildings. They were made of clay mixed with chopped straw, well kneaded by the feet,

* "Records of the Past," vol. xi.

and then placed in a wooden mould about 13 inches square, and from 2 to 4 feet thick. Fig. 43 is a photograph of one of the bricks. The cuneiform writing on it gives the name and titles of Sargon, and records the

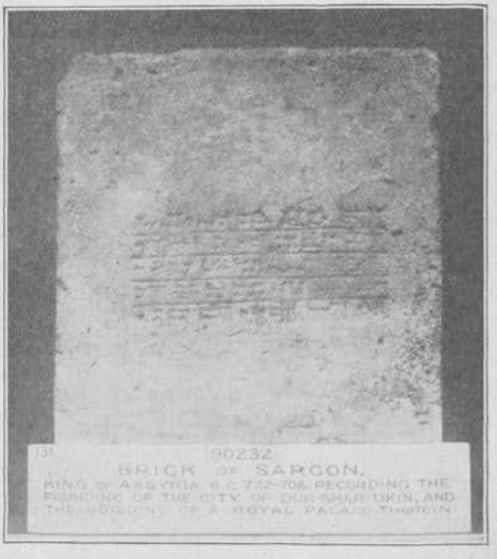

FIG. 43.—BRICK FROM THE PALACE OF SARGON —*British Museum.*

founding of the city of Dur-Sargon, and the building of the palace.

There were two entrances to the palace; in front of one was a double staircase leading down to the city. This staircase had three gateways;

the centre one, from which sprang a triumphal arch, was for the use of the king only, the other two being for the townspeople. On either side of the triumphal arch were towers, from the top of which floated the royal standards. The arch, which was made of beautiful enamelled bricks, sprang from the backs of the great winged bulls which stood at the foot of the towers.

In Fig. 40 you see one of the bulls which stood in a doorway leading to Sargon's palace. Two of these were brought from Dur-Sargon by Sir Henry Rawlinson, and they now stand in the British Museum. The inscriptions on them give an account of Sargon's wars and conquests, and his building of Dur-Sargon, his city. Truly his desire that his name should be known has been granted.

Yes! but think of it. When you are in London, go and look at one of those huge bulls, with wide-spreading wings and calm, serene, human face, and remember that all those centuries ago Sargon also gazed up at it as you are doing. Those proud, arrogant monarchs of Assyria, who considered no living man their equal, who put their feet upon the necks of kings, nevertheless, asked of this stone image protection from the evil spirits who, they believed, ever lurked at hand to harm them.

Within the gateway of the palace was a large court, into which all the townfolk were allowed to come. Every one met together—tradesmen, scribes, soldiers, state officials, priests, discussed the latest news brought in by the merchants from foreign parts.

On the three sides of this courtyard were the warehouses that contained the stores of the king; all the king's wealth, the plunder he brought home from his wars, the tribute and presents sent every year by the subject nations, were stored up in the palace. One room would contain the armour and weapons for the soldiers; another, copper; another, gold, silver, and jewels. In one room you might find huge jars of oil, which were often sent as tribute; in a second, precious ointment and spices; in a third, beautiful dyed cloth and rugs: for among the tribute paid him, Sargon mentions blue and purple stuffs, cloth of cotton, amber, pearls, sandal-wood, and ebony. Then there was the wine-cellar and the king's treasury. All these rooms were kept safely locked, under the charge of the most trusted servants of the king. Near at hand were the kitchens, and, further on, the stables for the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the choicest of which Sargon had brought home as tribute. There were a great number of little

dark rooms where the slaves and their families lived. They were fed and dressed by the king, and probably spent the greater part of their time in the open courts, so that these rooms were used merely as a shelter at night.

Through a small door you passed to the women's quarters. When Sargon built his palace he had three wives, to each of whom was given a separate house. But such a tiny house! It consisted only of a sitting-room, a staircase with eleven steps, and the bedroom. And this is where the queens lived all their days after they were married. To us it would seem like a prison, but they had not been accustomed to any other kind of life, and it may be that these queens considered they were the most fortunate of all women in being chosen as the wives of the king.

Sargon's private rooms were quite on the other side of the palace, and could be reached from the city by a long, sloping path. Lastly, there were the magnificent state halls, where the king held his court, received ambassadors, and gave great banquets. "With the chiefs of provinces, the satraps, wise men, astronomers, magnates, the lieutenants and governors of Assyria, I have ruled in my palace, and

administered justice." * So says the king in one of his inscriptions. His victories in war and his great hunts were shown on the slabs of stone, which formed a decoration to the lower portion of the walls. At the back of each slab is an explanation of the picture.

The temples of the gods were placed between the king's and the queens' apartments. There, a lofty ziggurat rose up where the priests might attend to the worship of the god and study the heavens. Sargon considered that the goddess Ishtar was especially favourable to him, even as she had been to his great namesake, Sargon of Accad. He never went to war or began any important work without praying to her and asking for her help. To Ashur also, the lord of the gods, he offered up this prayer:—

"May Ashur bless this city and this palace. May he invest these buildings with an eternal brightness. May he grant that they shall be inhabited till the remotest days. May the sculptured bull, the guarding spirit, stand for ever before his face. May he keep watch here day and night, and may his feet never move from this threshold."

The city was most carefully laid out in a perfect square, with the streets crossing it at

* "Records of the Past," vol. ix,

right angles. It was surrounded by a great wall 20 feet high and 25 yards wide—so wide that seven chariots could gallop abreast along it without touching each other.

The foundations of the wall were of stone, to a height of 3 feet only, then it was built of layers of brick with no mortar between; in time all the bricks joined together in one solid mass of clay which it was impossible for the battering-ram of any enemy to pierce through. At intervals along the walls there were strong towers where the soldiers always kept guard. There were eight gates into the city, each of which was sacred to a god, from whom it got its name. Among these was the gate of Bel, the gate of Ishtar, the gate of Raman.

From the gate of Ishtar, Sargon made a good road to Nineveh. It was about 12 yards wide, and at intervals there were stone posts to mark the distances.

The winged bulls stood at every gate to watch over the city and to prevent the evil spirits from entering. There were also placed at intervals along the walls little figures, amulets, and clay cylinders covered with magic words to keep away the evil spirits. The royal palace was raised high above the city on a platform of brick; it was half inside and half

outside the walls, but you could only reach it by going through the city.

Sargon laid the foundations of his city in 712 B.C. and he went to live in his palace in 705 B.C.

That huge building, those broad and high walls, had been built and finished in five years. Think of the enormous number of captives who must have toiled to complete so vast a work. Fig. 44 is a picture of captives building a mound. You see that some of them are still wearing their chains, and are toiling up the incline with their heavy burdens. As soon as they throw down their load of bricks they have to run down the hill to get more, and the overseer is always there urging them to work faster.

After the king had built his palace, and had laid out the streets of his city, whom did he get to live in it? Probably men of nobler birth than the captives employed in the building, but still foreigners, whom the king had conquered in war, and had forced to leave their countries in order to come and settle in Assyria.

If you and I had lived in those days and could have gone to Dur-Sargon, we should have seen much to interest us: the huge palace standing up high above the city, making the houses of the people look very small;

FIG. 44.—CAPTIVES BUILDING A PALACE MOUND—*Layard.*

the lofty ziggurat; the long streets with foot-paths on either side; and in those streets we should meet men of every nation—Medes and Persians, Syrians, Hittites and Phœnicians, Jews and Babylonians.

The streets looked very unlike those we are accustomed to see at the present day, for there were no windows in the side of the house facing a street. But if you went through the high, narrow door you would find yourself in a large square court, in the centre of which were trees and a well of water, and in a corner a baking oven and an open fireplace. All round the court was a verandah through which you could go to the bedrooms, sitting-rooms and store-places. The Assyrian houses were generally only one storey high; they had flat roofs on which the women spent nearly all their time. There they cooked, made their bread, and washed their clothes, chattering busily to one another from roof to roof as they worked.

If they were rich and could afford to have servants to do their household work, then they lay on soft cushions and made beautiful embroidery.

In the middle of the day when it was very hot, they went down to their rooms, which were cool and dark. The floors were paved,

and were watered many times a day, for this kept the air fresh.

There was very little furniture in the houses; a few stools and chairs, together with mats for sleeping on, were all that was necessary. The richest nobles and the king had wooden bedsteads with mattresses, but these were always considered a great luxury, and the soldiers are seen in the sculptures carrying them away as spoil.

Of the houses in which the people lived no trace remains to-day, only the well-paved streets and the eight gates can now be seen.

And what became of this glorious city of Sargon?

It fell when the might of Assyria was overthrown, and a great part of it was destroyed by fire, but, whether it was set on fire by any of the captives who had been forced to come and live in it, or by an outside enemy, no one knows. In time it became a grass-covered mound, which is called at the present day Khorsabad, by the Arabs living near it.

In 1842 M. Botta, the French Consul at Mosul, began to excavate the mound of Koyunjik. One day, an Arab who was looking on at the men digging trenches said that, if they came to the hill near his village, they might find

something; for curious carved stones had been dug up there. M. Botta was disappointed with the results of his work at Koyunjik, so he decided to send a few men to try the mound of Khorsabad, which the Arab had talked about. They dug a pit in the hill, and a short distance from the surface they came upon a wall. Digging along this, they excavated a whole room entirely lined with slabs of sculptured stone, showing battles, sieges, religious customs, human figures with wings, and all those low-relief carvings which we are quite accustomed to see in our museums at the present day, but which were altogether new to M. Botta, and his astonishment was very great. From the inscriptions at the back of the slabs it was discovered that this was the palace built by Sargon.

M. Botta received a large sum of money from the French Government to enable him to explore the mound thoroughly, and he excavated the whole of Sargon's palace.

Unfortunately the fire had so far injured the alabaster slabs that they crumbled away as soon as they were exposed to the air. All the objects which could be removed were taken to Paris, where they form an interesting part of the fine Assyrian Collection in the Louvre.

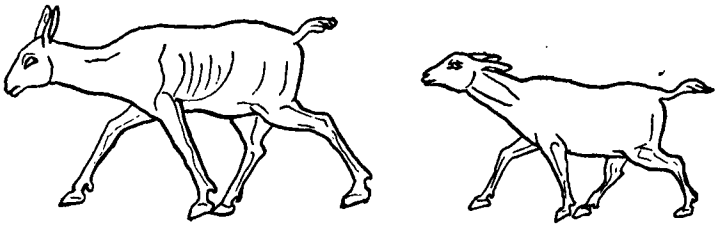

FIG. 44A.—DEER—*British Museum.*

CHAPTER XI

ISAIAH, THE PROPHET OF JUDAH

Now, at this time, there was living in Judah the great Hebrew prophet Isaiah, and it was largely owing to his wise counsel that his country preserved her independence for more than a hundred years after Israel was no longer a nation.

When Pekah of Israel made an alliance with Rezin of Damascus, he wanted to obtain the support of Judah. So the two kings determined to make war on Ahaz, dethrone him, and make some one king who would join their confederacy against Assyria. When Ahaz heard this, both he and his people were alarmed. Then Isaiah went to the king and told him to have no fear, for both Israel and Damascus would be destroyed by Assyria. Yet Ahaz did not believe him, although Isaiah wrote on a large slab the name of his little son, and set it up for all the people to see, telling them that it was a

sign that before the baby could say "My father and my mother," the King of Assyria should take away the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria.

In spite of this, Ahaz went his own way, and sent a present, which was really tribute, to the King of Assyria; from henceforth the kingdom of David was no longer independent. If after this any king of Judah less cowardly than Ahaz refused to pay tribute, it would be considered rebellion, and punished as such by the King of Assyria. We find also that the great trading cities, Damascus, Hamath, Arpad, and Carchemish were one by one captured by the Assyrians, and their inhabitants obliged to go and live in other cities in order to give place to Assyrian merchants. Their conquest was made easier for the Assyrians by the submission of Judah, because the fear of help from Egypt was removed. If an Egyptian army came to the help of the Assyrians it would first have to pass the formidable hill-fortress of Jerusalem. But after Samaria was taken, and the Israelites were carried away into captivity, when Sargon marched through Palestine and defeated the Egyptians at Raphia, the people of Judah began to realise the danger of Assyria, and we find Hezekiah, the successor of Ahaz, looking to

Egypt for help. Isaiah, who was the king's trusted adviser, urged him to adopt a very different policy. Neither to Egypt nor to Assyria was Judah to turn, but to trust to the Lord Jehovah.

Isaiah had been educated in the schools of the prophets, an institution which might be compared to our universities. He was well read in all the Hebrew literature of the past, and he was very interested in the politics of his own day. He realised better than did many of the Jews the might and power of Assyria, and he had no faith in the Egyptians. They were always promising help, but they never sent it; over and over again in his prophecies Isaiah denounces their bad faith. He desires the men of Judah to take no part in political affairs. "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." Such advice Hezekiah the king was very unwilling to follow, and he quite disregarded it when he received an embassy from the King of Babylon. Hezekiah had been seriously ill, and his life was despaired of; on his recovery Merodach-Baladan, the King of Babylon, sent an embassy with a present to congratulate him. The embassy also brought proposals for an alliance against Assyria.

Hezekiah was very pleased at the attention paid him by the King of Babylon, and in order to impress his visitors with his power, he showed them, not only his palace, but his storehouses, his silver and gold, his spices and precious ointment, his armour, and all his treasures.

Isaiah, his great minister and friend, came and asked him who the men were, and what they had seen. And Hezekiah said, "There is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them."

Then Isaiah told the king that the days would come when all his store should be carried to Babylon and even his sons should be servants in the palace of the King of Babylon—but not King Merodach-Baladan. The King of Babylon who should carry away the riches of Judah would be a king who had conquered Babylon. Notwithstanding Isaiah's warning, Hezekiah seems to have joined with Babylon, Edom, Moab, the Philistines, and Egypt against Assyria.

Before, however, the allies could assemble all their armies, Sargon sent his chief general the Tartan to besiege Ashdod, one of the cities of the Philistines.

And the prophet Isaiah walked the streets of Jerusalem for three years, barefoot, in a

captive's dress, as a warning to the people, telling them that even so would the Egyptians and Ethiopians be dressed when they were taken captive by the Assyrians, and this also might the Jews expect, if they put their trust in Egypt to deliver them from the Assyrians. The very next year Babylon was conquered by Sargon, who was crowned there king of Sumer and Accad.

In 705 B.C. Sargon was murdered and was succeeded by his son Sennacherib.

In spite of Isaiah's warnings Hezekiah again made an alliance with Egypt. Then came Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, about which we read in the Second Book of Kings.

The Assyrians besieged the fenced cities of Judah, and the important town of Lachish was taken.

Fig. 45 is a picture of Sennacherib seated on his throne while the spoil from Lachish is being carried past him. The cuneiform writing in the space in front of the king reads:—

"Sennacherib, king of hosts, King of Assyria, sat upon his throne of state, and the spoil of the city of Lachish passed before him." *

Too late Hezekiah saw his mistake. He sent

* British Museum Guide to the Babylonian and Assyrian Collections.

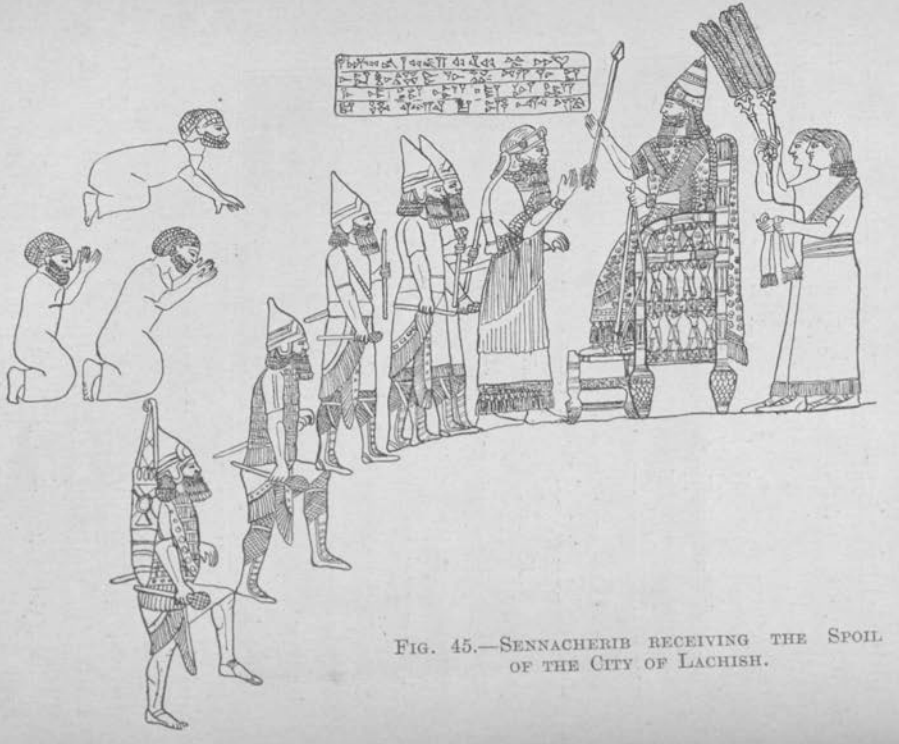

FIG. 45.—SENNACHERIB RECEIVING THE SPOIL OF THE CITY OF LACHISH.

a great present of silver and gold to the king, and begged to become again his ally. But the only terms on which Sennacherib would agree were the surrender of Jerusalem. He sent his Tartan or commander-in-chief, his Rabshakeh or general, and his secretary or scribe, the

FIG. 46.—CHASE OF WILD ASSES—*British Museum.*

Rabsaris, together with a great host, to Hezekiah to demand the surrender of Jerusalem. They came and stood in front of the city and called to the king. Hezekiah did not appear. He sent three officers of the household to treat with the embassy, and all the

people of Jerusalem stood along the wall and listened.

The Rabshakeh spoke in the Hebrew language: "Speak ye now to Hezekiah," he said. ". . . On whom dost thou trust that thou rebellest against me?" He went on to say that Pharaoh, King of Egypt, was a bruised reed to all who trusted in him, which was exactly what Isaiah had so often told the Jews. But when the Rabshakeh boldly said that Jehovah had told Sennacherib to go up against the land of Judah and destroy it, then Hezekiah's officers were afraid that the people on the wall listening to these words might believe them, so they asked the Assyrians to speak in the Syrian language. But the Rabshakeh refused; he even turned to speak directly to the people, saying that Hezekiah would deceive them, and asked them if any god had ever delivered a country from the attack of the Assyrians. It was no use; the people believed in their king: "they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not."

But matters looked very black in Jerusalem. Hezekiah and his court put on mourning garments, and entreated Isaiah to lift up his prayer to God for the remnant of the people that

was left. The great prophet sent back strong words of comfort. "Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the King of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

Now at last the King of Egypt was advancing with an army against the Assyrians, and Sennacherib was afraid that Hezekiah might attack him in the rear when he was fighting against the Egyptians. So he sent a letter to the King of Judah representing still more strongly the impossibility of resisting his might. "Where is the King of Hamath, and the King of Arpad?" he said. Hezekiah knew only too well that these great cities had not been able to withstand the onslaught of Assyria.

He went into the Temple and spread out his letter before the Lord, and in a most beautiful prayer he asks for help. Again Isaiah reassures the king; and, suddenly, what he had previously foretold came to pass. It is thought that one of those deadly plagues which occur in the East broke out in Sennacherib's army and attacked his officers and soldiers. The king was

forced to withdraw his troops from Jerusalem and depart home.

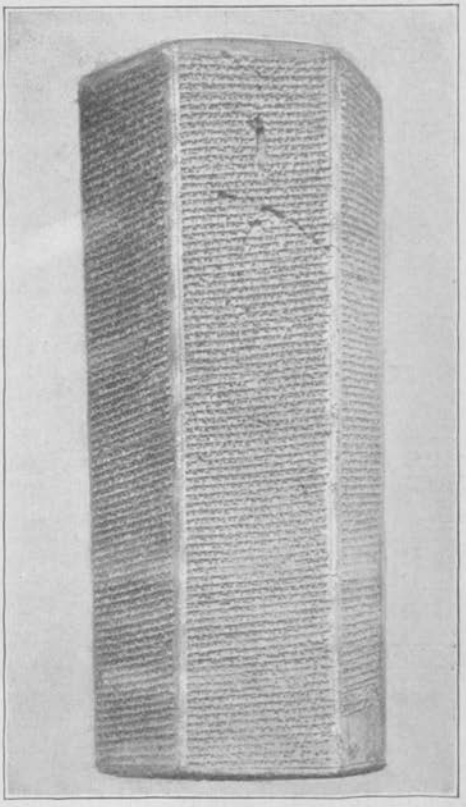

FIG. 47.—CYLINDER OF SENNACHERIB.

Fig. 47 is a picture of a clay cylinder on which Sennacherib gives an account of his

invasion of Palestine and his siege of Jerusalem. In it he says that he shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem "like a bird in a cage." No mention is made of the misfortune which caused him to abandon the siege, for the Assyrian kings

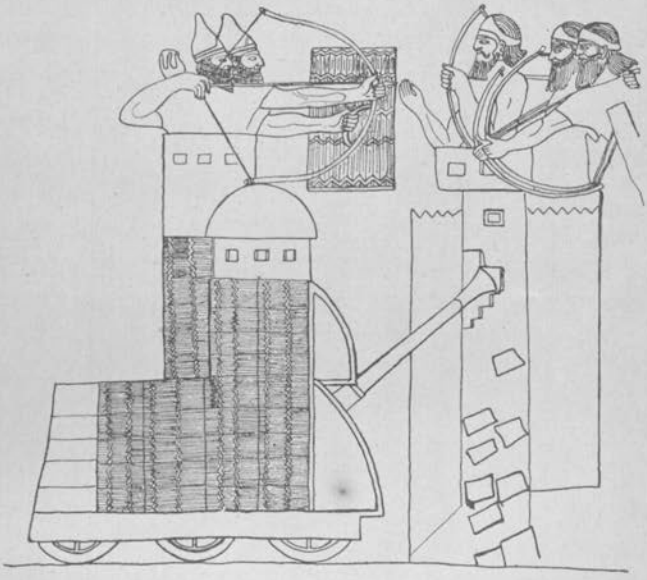

FIG. 48.—BATTERING-RAM USED IN BESIEGING A CITY—*Layard.*

never recorded their defeats; but Sennacherib says Hezekiah sent after him to Nineveh a tribute of "thirty talents of gold, eight hundred talents of silver, precious stones, eye-paint . . . ivory couches and thrones, hides and tusks,

precious woods, and divers objects, a heavy treasure, together with his daughters, and the women of his palace, and male and female musicians." Undoubtedly this was the treasure which Hezekiah sent to Sennacherib when he was besieging Lachish.

So Jerusalem was spared, as Isaiah had said of the King of Assyria: "He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it."

Though Sennacherib lived twenty years after this, he never sent another expedition against Judah, so that during the last years of Isaiah the Jews were free and independent.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB.

By Lord Byron.

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:
And the tents were all silent—the banners alone—
The lances unlifted—the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

FIG. 49.—KING IN HIS CHARIOT RETURNING HOME IN TRIUMPH—*Layard.*

CHAPTER XII

NINEVEH

OF all the cities of Assyria, perhaps the one of which we have heard most is Nineveh, that great city, to whose people God ordered the prophet Jonah to go and preach.

Jonah was living at the time in peace and honour in the land of Israel, which was very prosperous under Jeroboam II. No doubt he was held in favour by the king, to whom he had prophesied victory in his war against Syria, and this prophecy had been fulfilled.

Then the Word of the Lord came to Jonah,

saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before Me." And what did Jonah do? Why, he took ship and went as far East as he possibly could, even to Tarshish in Spain, so greatly did he fear what might befall him in Nineveh. You remember how he had to come back and do as God wished, and how the men of Nineveh repented. From the account of Jonah's mission we learn something of the power and extent of Nineveh. In the last verse of the last chapter it is called "that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle" (Jonah iv. 11).

Now babies are the only persons who do not know which is their right or left hand: if therefore the man who wrote this account meant that there was this number of children in Nineveh, then there must have been at least six hundred thousand grown-up people in the whole city. On the other hand, the writer may only be comparing the people of Nineveh to children because they did not know the difference between good and evil; but even so, if there were one hundred and twenty thousand people, Nineveh would still be a great city,

for we have always to remember that there were not nearly so many people in the world at that time as there are at the present day.

Even the ruins of Nineveh, which are still to be seen, are enormous. The mound on which the great palaces were built is one hundred acres in extent, and 95 feet high.

It has been reckoned that the king who built it would have to employ twenty thousand men for six years to raise the mound alone; this was, no doubt, the constant daily work of those thousands of poor wretched captives which the great conquering kings of Assyria brought home every year from their wars.

The city was surrounded by a massive wall 100 feet high, so wide that three chariots might drive abreast along the top of it. It is probable that pasture-land for the cattle was enclosed within the walls. Each great house also would stand in the midst of its own grounds. We find at the present day that a town in Asia, such as Damascus, occupies much more space than does a town in England having the same number of people living in it.

We have seen that while M. Botta was exploring the mound of Koyunjik, he was called away to Khorsabad, and there he discovered the city of Sargon. After Layard had explored the

palaces at Calah, he came to Mosul, and began to dig trenches in the mound of Koyunjik.

His Arabs worked for some days and only found bits of burnt alabaster, which showed that, at some time, the city had been destroyed by fire. One morning two Arab women came in great excitement to Layard, who was in Mosul, telling him that sculptures had been discovered. They had rushed off in great haste

FIG. 50.—FUGITIVE SWIMMING ON AN INFLATED SKIN ACROSS A RIVER—*Layard.*

in order to get the present which is always given in the East to the bearer of good news, and had swum across the river on inflated skins, which the Arabs use just as much at the present day as the Assyrians did in the olden times. Layard had no sooner given the women their reward than his overseer, who was called Toma Shishman, or Fat Thomas, appeared, breathless with his exertions and

very disappointed when he found the women had arrived before him.

In a month's time nine halls and rooms of a palace had been excavated. On all the sculptures and bricks the name of the king who built

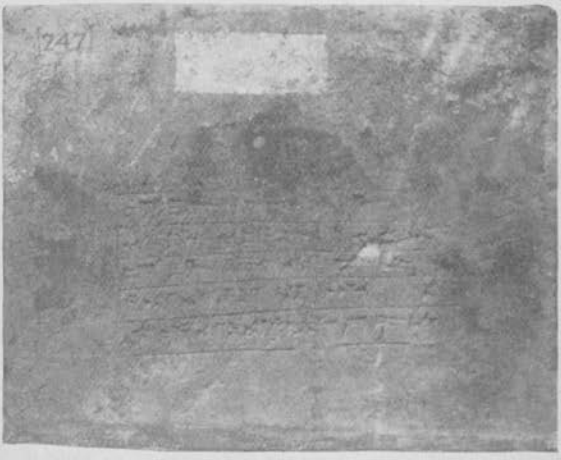

FIG. 51.—A BRICK FROM SENNACHERIB'S PALACE AT NINEVEH—*British Museum.*

it was inscribed in cuneiform characters. In Fig. 51 you see a brick so inscribed. It was brought from Koyunjik, and it records the name and titles of Sennacherib and the building of his palace in the city of Nineveh.

For this was the palace of that King Sen-

nacherib who troubled Hezekiah of Judah, and had to return home without effecting the conquest of Jerusalem.

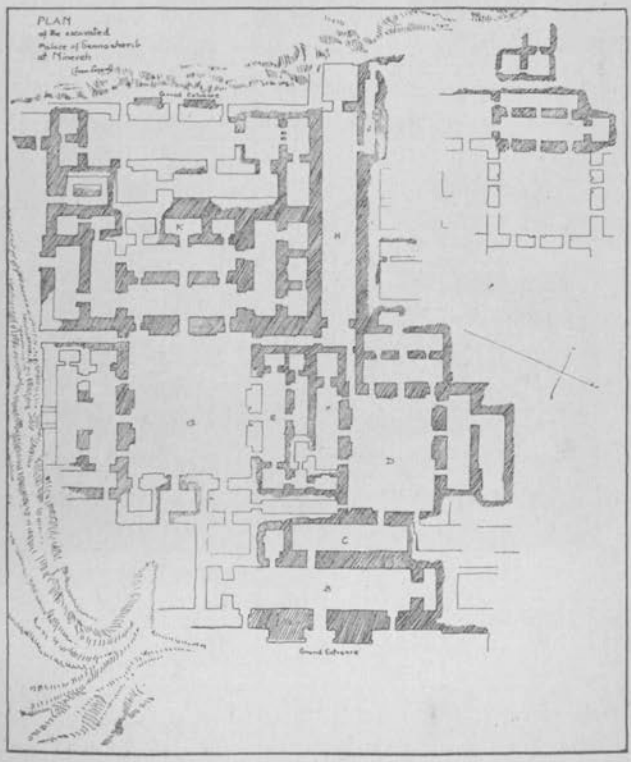

FIG. 52.—PLAN OF THE EXCAVATED PALACE OF SENNACHERIB AT NINEVEH—*Layard.*

Sir Henry Layard made two expeditions to the ruins of Nineveh, and excavated the whole

of Sennacherib's palace. Fig. 52 gives a plan which he made of it. You will notice that there are three large central halls, round each of which are a number of rooms. The arrangement of the building is very different from that of a modern palace; there are no corridors connecting the rooms, and it must have been rather difficult to get from one room to another.

There was a grand entrance on the north-east and on the south-west façades of the building. In the frontispiece to this book you see a picture of what Sir Henry Layard believed the north-east front of the palace looked like in the days of Sennacherib.

The three entrances are guarded by the great winged bulls, of which no less than ten were found along this front alone, each standing about 16½ feet high. Under their bodies were long inscriptions giving an account of the temples, the building of the palace, and the annals of six years of Sennacherib's reign. The king mentions his defeat of Merodach-Baladan, that King of Babylon who sent the embassy to Hezekiah. The victories over the Hittites, Syrians, and Egyptians are mentioned, also the campaign against Hezekiah, King of Judah, at Lachish.

Sennacherib also speaks of having ships built on the Tigris by Phœnician sailors from Tyre and Sidon, in order to take his army down the river to attack two cities, belonging to the King of Elam, at its mouth.

The pavement in front of the palace was of alabaster carved in beautiful designs, one of which you see in Fig. 54. But let us pass through the entrance, and then we shall find another more vivid history of Sennacherib's reign in the pictures carved on the walls of

FIG. 53.—SIN-IKKI-IRIB OR SENNACHERIB.

his long galleries and his great halls. First we come to a narrow room nearly four times as long as it is wide (B on plan). On its walls are shown the burning and sacking of a city, and the carrying away of the spoil by the conquerors. The houses of the city, some of them two and three stories high, are in flames.

The king, seated on his throne, with his attendants, is receiving the prisoners; all over the background of the picture is a network of lines

to show that the fallen city was in a mountainous country. In another part of this hall people

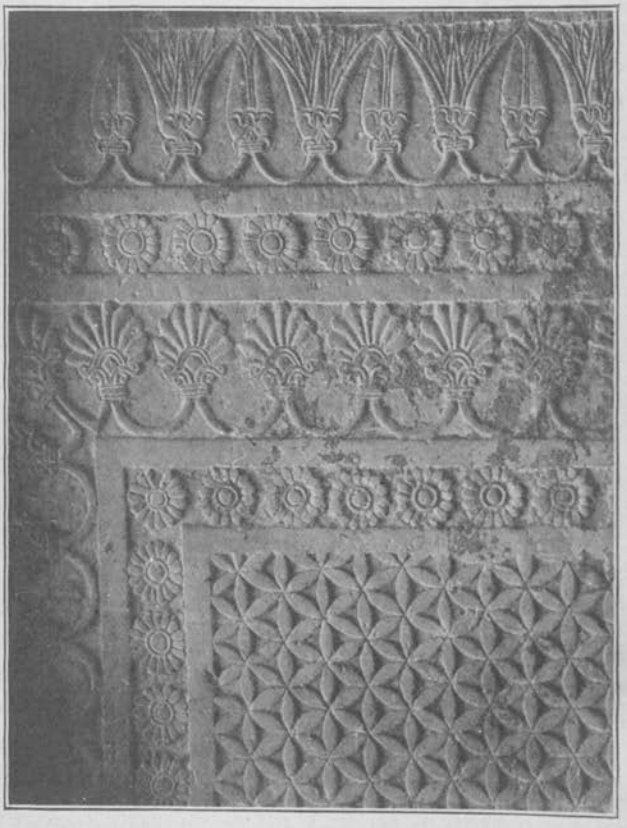

FIG. 54.—PAVEMENT SLAB—*British Museum.*

are embarking in large ships (Fig. 55). The women wear very curious head-dresses; they

may be the Phœnicians fleeing away from the terrible Assyrian foe.

From this hall a narrow entrance about 6 feet wide leads into a second gallery (C), where we find the history of another campaign, the siege and sack of a city, the bringing in of the spoil, and the triumph of the king (Fig. 49).

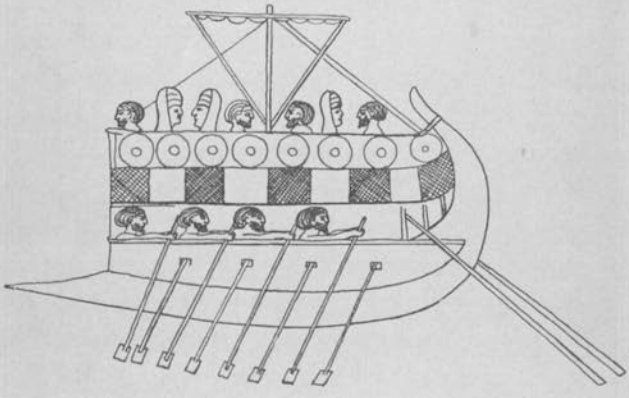

FIG. 55.—ENEMY OF ASSYRIA TAKING REFUGE IN SHIPS—*Layard.*

He is standing in his chariot, raising his right hand in token of triumph. He wears a high crown and an elaborately fringed and embroidered dress. His attendant holds over him an umbrella with a long curtain to screen him entirely from the sun. The chariot is being driven through a grove of palm-trees, by the banks of a river, which seems to be full

of fish. From this gallery we pass into one of the great halls (D), 90 feet in breadth and 120 feet in length. In the centre of each side is a grand entrance guarded by colossal bulls and winged giants. The walls are completely covered with sculptures carved with the greatest care and finish. On two sides is shown the conquest of a people in a mountainous country. On the north side, however, the sculptures show the way in which the Assyrians moved the colossal bulls from the quarry in which they were roughly hewn out to the palace doorways, where they were placed in position, and where the carving was completed.

These huge statues were placed on sledges to which thick ropes were fastened, which were held by numberless captives, who, pulling all together, endeavoured to drag the heavy weight along. Movable rollers were placed under the sledge, but, even so, it was almost impossible to move it over rough ground; therefore other slaves were employed to raise the sledge behind by massive beams of wood, which acted as levers. You can see the slab in the British Museum. On the bull itself are the overseers. One of them seems to be clapping his hands to beat time, so that all the men shall pull together. Another is holding what looks like a speaking trumpet to

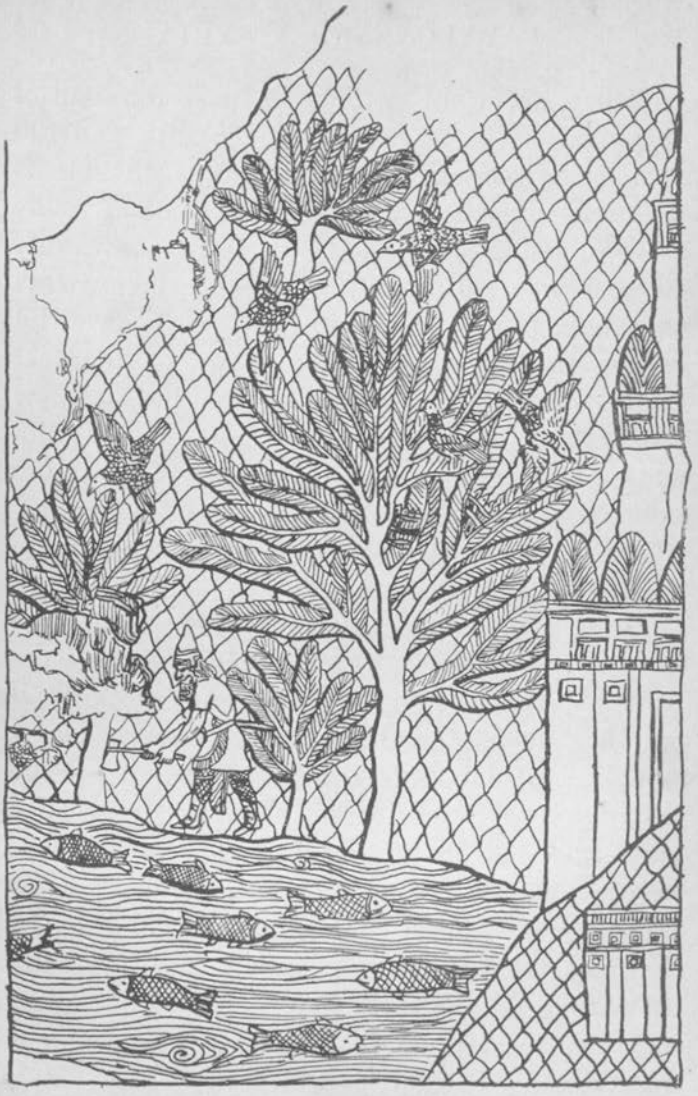

FIG. 56.—A FORTIFIED CITY IN A MOUNTAINOUS DISTRICT. ASSYRIAN SOLDIERS CUTTING DOWN TREES.

his mouth. At the top of the picture is a river, on which are boats laden with beams and implements for moving the bulls. In this room also is shown the building of the palace mound by captives, which you see in Fig. 44. The series is finished by the final placing of the bull, which is kept erect by a framework of wood. Sir Henry Layard tells us that he used exactly the same methods for removing the bulls from the mound of Koyunjik to the river, when he sent them to England.

FIG. 57.—ATTENDANT CARRYING LOCUSTS —*Layard.*

The king is shown superintending the removal of the bull, and over him is this inscription: "Sennacherib, King of Assyria, the great figures of bulls in the land of Belad made for his royal palace at Nineveh, he transported thither."

Not only in the great hall but in the narrow gallery (H) the process of moving the great bulls was shown. From this gallery a sloping passage (J) probably led down to the river.

Along its walls were a procession of servants carrying the food for a banquet. In Fig. 57 you see a picture of one of them carrying locusts; other servants carried little tables on which were baskets of fruit and cakes. On the opposite wall were men leading horses by a halter, which was merely fastened round

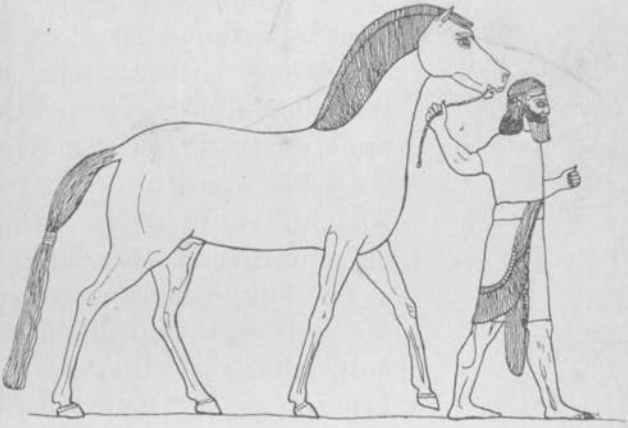

FIG. 58.—MAN LEADING HORSE—*Layard.*

the lower jaw (Fig. 58). Returning to the hall (D), we find on either side long narrow rooms. In the one marked F on the plan the bas-reliefs represented the siege of a castle by the Assyrian army. In Fig. 59 you see them attacking. First comes the archer with outstretched bow, then the slingers, and behind

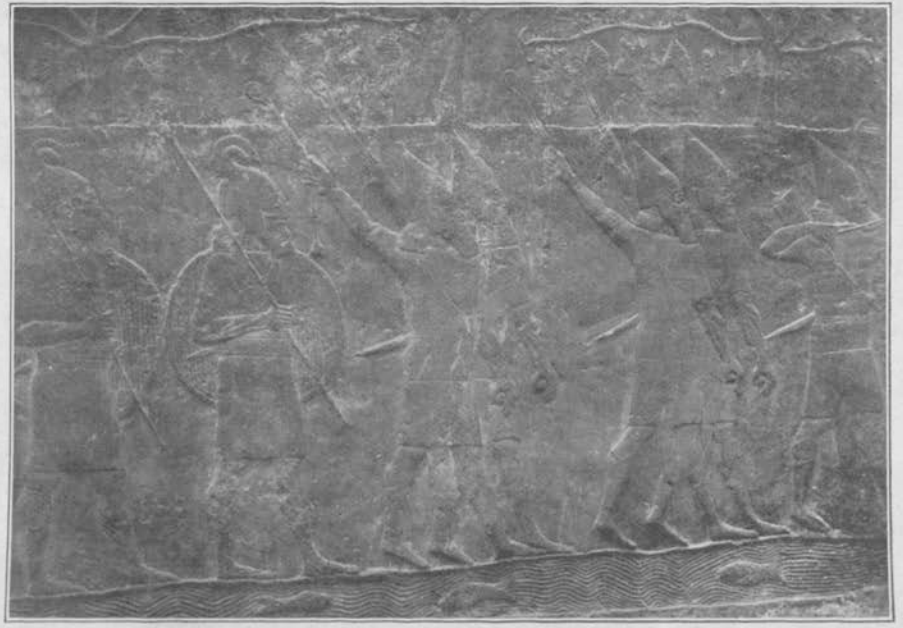

FIG. 59.—ASSYRIAN ARMY ATTACKING A FORTRESS—*British Museum.*

them the spearmen, who carry round wicker shields. These slabs were brought to England, and are now in the Nineveh Gallery of the British Museum. Many of them are blackened by the fire that raged in the palace when it was destroyed.

Passing through some small rooms into a long gallery (E), we arrive at another great central hall (G), on the walls of which we find the history of another campaign—this time in a country through which flowed a great river. The passage of this river by the Assyrian army is shown; a number of men are inflating and making ready the skins to form a raft on which the king will cross; and the soldiers are busy preparing skins, by the help of which they will swim across. In Fig. 60 you see a warrior buoyed up by his skin, carrying his heavy shield on his back.

From this hall we go forward to a little room (K), on the walls of which were sculptured those scenes from Sennacherib's campaign against Lachish of which we spoke in the last chapter.

These sculptures were all brought over to England, and are now in the Assyrian Saloon of the British Museum.

The slabs in Sennacherib's palace were much

larger in size than those in the palace of Ashur-nasir-pal. They did not each contain a single picture of some exploit in hunting or war, as did those at Calah, but the whole of the slabs lining the four walls of a room generally give the entire history of a campaign.

The king and his nobles are shown going out in their chariots to battle, followed by the horse-

FIG. 60.—WARRIOR SWIMMING ON AN INFLATED SKIN—*Layard*.

men and the different regiments of archers, spearmen, and slingers; next we see the war in the enemy's country, and here the sculptor tries to give an idea of the nature of the country by putting in a background of trees, mountains, rivers, etc.; sometimes, also, by putting little touches, such as birds on their nests or grapes on the vines (Figs. 56 and 92), he gives us the

season of the year; lastly, we see the triumphal return of the king with the captives and the spoil. There are no inscriptions on the slabs to give any explanation of the scenes.

You will see from the plan what a large number of rooms the palace of Sennacherib contained. Sir Henry Layard opened out seventy-one halls, galleries, and rooms, the

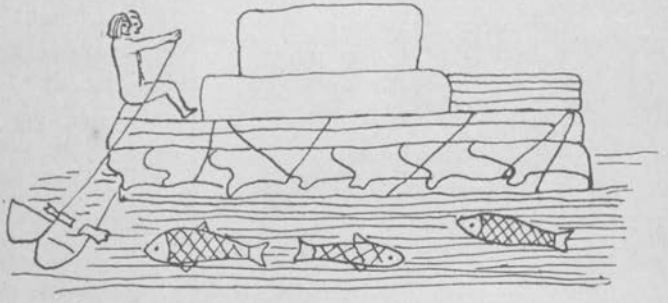

FIG. 61.—RAFT BUOYED UP WITH INFLATED SKINS—*Layard.*

walls of which were panelled with the sculptured alabaster. If it were possible to place these walls side by side they would form a length of nearly two miles. When we look at the multitude of little figures which are shown on one slab alone, some of them as small as 3 inches, others about a foot in height, we get some idea of the number of artists who must have been employed for the decora-

tive part of the work alone; and when we remember that these sculptures were painted in rich and beautiful colours, we feel that both the exterior and interior of Sennacherib's palace must have been a sight of great magnificence. Well might Ezekiel compare a city which could produce such a building to the beautiful cedars of Lebanon.

In one of his inscriptions Sennacherib tells us that he spent the last years of his life in improving his city of Nineveh.

He did what the kings, his fathers, had never thought of doing, he cared for the health of the people by bringing streams of water into the city.

Hitherto there had been no good water-supply, and "murmurings had ascended on high," he says, "from the assemblies of people, drinking-water they know not, and to the rains from the vault of Heaven their eyes were directed."

In a country where there are long spells of hot weather without any rain at all, such a lack of water not only caused discomfort to the people, but also prevented the corn from yielding good crops.

Sennacherib caused sixteen canals to be dug, then he turned the stream of the Kosr to fill them, and he regulated the waters of the Tigris

so that they should not harm the mound on which the palace was built. He had the inscription which records this achievement engraved on a rock at Bavian, a district to the north-east of Nineveh, and there it is to this day.

It may be that Ezekiel was thinking of these waters when he writes of the glory of Assyria: "Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of a high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. . . . Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him; . . . nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty" (Ezek. xxxi. 3–8).

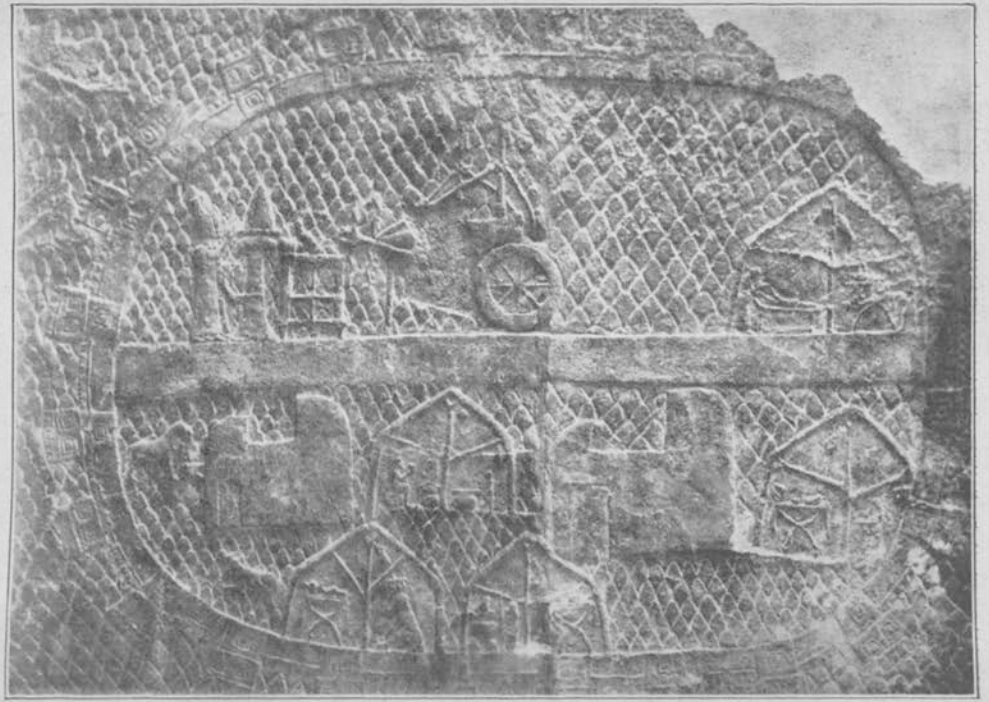

FIG. 62.—HOUSES AND TENTS IN A FORTIFIED CITY—*British Museum.*

FIG. 63.—LOADING A CAMEL—*Layard.*

CHAPTER XIII

ESARHADDON

SENNACHERIB was succeeded by Esarhaddon, a most gracious and kindly monarch.

His name means, "Ashur has given a brother," which shows that he was not the eldest son; indeed, the two sons of Sennacherib who murdered their father were older than Esarhaddon, and he had to fight against them and conquer them in order to get possession of the throne. Sennacherib had utterly laid waste the city of Babylon, which had rebelled against Assyria, and had even taken the images of the gods out of the temples to show his supreme contempt for them.

But now, for the first time in Assyrian history,

we find the king adopting a friendly attitude to the subject nations, and trying to conciliate them by his mild rule. Esarhaddon rebuilt the temples which had been desecrated, he also sent back to Babylon the images of the gods which his father had taken away; and he pleased the Babylonians greatly by making the city his royal residence for part of the year.

He seems to have possessed in a large measure that most engaging faculty which we call tact, for in the inscription on the memorial stone (Fig. 64) in which he gives an account of his restoration of the walls and temples of Babylon, he makes no mention of the defeat of the Babylonians by his father Sennacherib.

Perhaps Esarhaddon was too filial a son to hand down to posterity his father's terrible cruelties, of which he could not approve, but probably also he had no desire to remind the Babylonians of their defeat. At any rate, he merely says in this inscription that the Babylonians, by some wrong deed, had made their god Merodach so angry that he laid waste the city and destroyed the people with rains and floods. Even the gods forsook their shrines and the people were carried away captive. At last Merodach had pity on the people and told Esarhaddon to rebuild Babylon. So the king

immediately got together his workmen and restored the temple E-sagil, and the two great

FIG. 64.—STELE OF ESARHADDON—*British Museum.*

walls of the city. He put new images of the gods in the shrines, and brought back the people from captivity. This inscription is written in

very old Babylonian writing, perhaps because it looked more decorative, but it may have been done also in order to gratify the people.

It was while Esarhaddon was holding his court in Babylon that one of his captains brought Manasseh, King of Judah, bound with fetters, a prisoner before him, but the king pardoned Manasseh, and allowed him to return to Jerusalem and rule over his kingdom. We find that instead of appointing Assyrian Governors, as previous kings had done, Esarhaddon allowed the nations he conquered to keep their own rulers, so long as they paid tribute; nor did he force the conquered peoples to become Assyrians, and to worship the god Ashur. He allowed them to retain their own religion, and their own habits and customs. Through this policy there were fewer revolts within the empire, and the conquered nations were more willing to accept the Assyrian king as their lawful ruler.

But though Esarhaddon himself was of a peaceful disposition, he had to fight during a great part of his reign to free his empire from attacks by the tribes living on its boundaries.

Also the old trade rivalry between Egypt and Assyria was as strong as ever, and the Assyrians believed that the King of Egypt was continually

stirring up the people of Syria and Palestine to revolt.

A great Assyrian army marched against Tirhakah, King of Egypt, who was persuading the King of Tyre to rebel. Esarhaddon took the sea-coast route along the Mediterranean, from Aphek in the north to Raphia. There he defeated the Egyptians, and pursued them to Memphis, which he entered in triumph. From Memphis he took his army in boats up the Nile to Thebes, the capital of Upper Egypt, which also submitted. The whole country was then divided into twenty districts, most of which were ruled over by Egyptian princes, but Assyrian troops were placed in some of the most important towns.

Rich spoil was brought home to Assyria from Egypt; all the furniture, the fine clothing, the gold, silver, and precious stones belonging to the treasury of Tirhakah, the Pharaoh, fell into the hands of Esarhaddon. Much of this he used, no doubt, to decorate his palaces at Nineveh and Calah; for Esarhaddon, following the custom of all the powerful Assyrian monarchs, built himself a new palace within the walls of Nineveh. We know very little about this palace, for it is buried under the mound of Nebbi Yunus, as the Arabs call it, the name meaning "Jonah's

Mount." On this mound of Nebbi Yunus is built a Mohammedan Mosque, which is believed by the Arabs, and also by the Turks who govern the district, to contain the tomb of the prophet Jonah. It is on that account considered sacred, therefore the Turkish Governor will not allow any excavations to be made.

FIG. 65.—ASSYRIAN SOLDIERS FIGHTING IN PAIRS—*Layard.*

Esarhaddon's palace at Calah was built with the materials used in an older palace that had fallen into decay. There is no doubt that these palaces built of sun-dried bricks did not remain in good order for very long, and we have to remember that people in the East never mend anything; such neglect, at least, is characteristic

of them at the present day, and it is not to be supposed that their habits were very different in former times. The great storms of wind and rain would also work havoc in the walls if they were not continually repaired.

And labour was of no consideration; there were always those numberless captives who could be told off to make bricks with which to build the massive walls, such work requiring very little skilled labour.

Esarhaddon's palace at Calah had been almost entirely destroyed by fire. It had a grand entrance overlooking the plain, and a magnificent hall 220 feet long, and 100 feet wide. Sir Henry Layard thought that, in its shape and general plan, it approached more nearly to the description of Solomon's palace, as it is given us in the Bible, than any other of the Assyrian buildings which have yet been discovered.

FIG. 66.—ASHUR-BANI-PAL HUNTING LIONS AND LEADING A SECOND HORSE—*British Museum.*

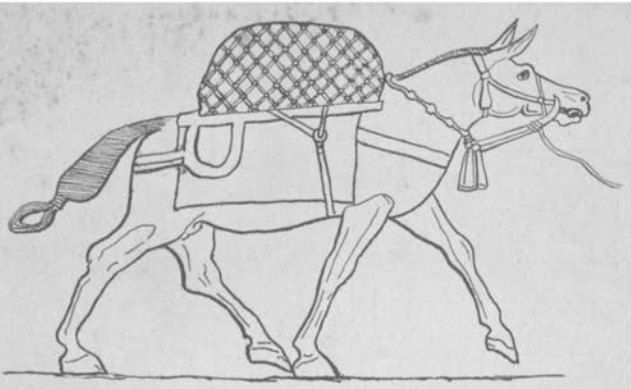

FIG. 67.—MULE CARRYING NETS FOR DEER-HUNTING —*British Museum.*

CHAPTER XIV

THE LAST GREAT KING OF NINEVEH

IN the reign of Ashur-bani-pal, the son of Esarhaddon, the Assyrian Empire was at the height of its power. There was, however, much discontent in Egypt. Again and again the subject kings appointed by Esarhaddon rebelled, and we read of two being sent in chains to Nineveh. Ashur-bani-pal, following the example of his father, tried at first to conciliate the Egyptians by pardoning the kings, and giving them rich presents.

But it was very galling for the great nation of Egypt, with a long and splendid history behind it, to submit to the yoke of Assyria,

and ever and again the people rebelled. At last the Assyrians took a terrible revenge. Marching down to Thebes, they utterly destroyed the city; they even tried to blot out its very existence.

In those days Thebes was one of the most magnificent cities in the world. Even to-day the ruins of its mighty buildings far exceed those of any other monuments. But when Ashur-bani-pal entered the city, it must indeed have been a fair sight to behold. Its temples were adorned with solemn sphinxes, lofty obelisks, and colossal statues. The many columns which supported the massive roofs and the high walls were of hard stone, carved and painted.

For more than a thousand years king after king had taken delight in adding to the splendour of the mighty temple of Amun, situated at Karnak on the eastern side of the Nile; merchants from many lands came to No-Amun, as Thebes was generally called, and, returning home, spread the story of her magnificence. Suddenly, the news of her downfall came as a shock to the surrounding peoples.

But even while Ashur-bani-pal was boasting of the spoil—the silver and gold, the horses

and the elephants, the rich furniture, the precious stones, the huge obelisks, the many captives which his army brought away from Thebes—there was living, in a village of Galilee, a prophet of Israel who in powerful and convincing words foretold the downfall of the mighty Assyrian Empire.

"Art thou better than populous No, that was situate among the rivers?" asks Nahum, "Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite. Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they" (*i.e.* the enemy) "cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains." "And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste." And when we think of the silent grassy mound of Koyunjik to-day, we realise how exactly that prophecy has been fulfilled. From Nahum also we learn why this doom should fall upon Nineveh. "Woe to the bloody city!" he cries, "it is all full of lies and robbery" (Nahum iii. 1).

The besetting sins of the Assyrians were pride and cruelty. They seem to have considered every nation as so inferior to themselves that

they never troubled to keep their promises; over and over again we read in the Bible of their treachery and violence. "Woe to thee that spoilest," cries Isaiah, "though thou wast not spoiled, and dealest treacherously though they dealt not treacherously with thee."

The inscriptions also of the Assyrian kings, the accounts which they had written down of their wars, the very sculptures which were carved on their walls, show us that what the Hebrew prophets said about them is quite true. Each king relates his conquests and his cruel treatment of his enemies as something which is very pleasing to his god Ashur, against whom these people have rebelled. When the king orders the tongues of his prisoners to be torn out, it is because they have uttered blasphemies against Ashur.

Among the sculptures in Sennacherib's palace are to be seen Assyrian soldiers torturing their prisoners in the most horrible manner. The soldiers seem to have been given a reward for each head of an enemy, because the scribes are always found writing down on rolls of some soft material, probably leather, the number of heads which the soldiers bring in (Fig. 68).

The spoil brought home from the numerous wars, in addition to the riches gained by

successful trading, made the people of Nineveh become very luxurious in their habits. "Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven," says Nahum of the Assyrians. We know that Carchemish, Damascus, Sidon, the great trading towns of the Hittites, Syrians, and Phœnicians had been conquered; only the

FIG. 68.—SCRIBE WRITING DOWN NUMBERS OF SLAIN ON ROLL OF LEATHER—*Layard.*

rich city of Tyre was left, though it had been attacked and forced to pay tribute many times, and it was finally captured after the sack of Thebes.

Ashur-bani-pal seems to have been as pleasure-loving and as fond of pomp and magnificence as his people were. He built a

palace on the mound at Nineveh, and the sculptures found in its ruins are finer than those of any other king, showing that the Assyrian artists had gradually improved, and were now doing the most beautiful of all their work. In Fig. 69 you see the king in his chariot hunting lions, and you can form an idea of the luxury of the time from the rich decorations of his dress, and the massive ornaments, the earrings, armlets, and bracelets, which he wears.

Even his charioteer wears a heavily embroidered tunic and armlets, though his hair is only tied with a fillet. In Fig. 66 Ashur-bani-pal is hunting lions, and leading a second horse. The artist has worked in all the detail of the king's dress and the gorgeous trappings of the horse with great skill. The led horse wears round his neck a band with little bells upon it. The saddle appears to be of embroidered or embossed leather, and is fastened by a strap round the chest of the horse.

The Assyrians seem to have taken great pride in their horses, which were beautiful creatures, and were never used as beasts of burden. Camels and mules carried the baggage, but the horses were used only for war and for the chase. They had beautiful long tails, which

FIG. 69.—ASHUR-BANI-PAL IN HIS CHARIOT HUNTING LIONS—*British Museum.*

were never cut short as we see them at the present day, but were kept well brushed, and tied in the middle, probably with wool.

Ezekiel speaks of the captains and rulers of the Assyrians "clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men."

When he returned from hunting, Ashur-bani-pal thanked his gods by pouring out a libation to them over the lions he had killed. In Fig. 70 you see the king standing holding his bow in one hand while with the other he pours the wine over the lions placed before the altar, which is heaped up with the offerings to the gods.

Behind the king are the attendants with the fly-flappers, and at the back a groom is holding his hunter.

The inscription above the lions reads: "I, Ashur-bani-pal, king of hosts, King of Assyria, whom Ashur and Belit have endowed with might, slew four lions. The powerful bow of Ishtar, the lady of battle, over them I held, and I poured out a libation over them." *

But Ashur-bani-pal did not endure the hardships of desert sport. He hunted his lions in his own royal park. They were captured alive

* British Museum Guide to the Babylonian and Assyrian Antiquities.

FIG. 70.—ASHUR-BANI-PAL POURING A LIBATION OVER FOUR DEAD LIONS—*British Museum.*

and kept in cages, from which they were let out when the king desired to amuse himself with hunting. In Fig. 71 you see a lion very suspiciously creeping out of his cage, and in Fig. 70 is another that has evidently turned

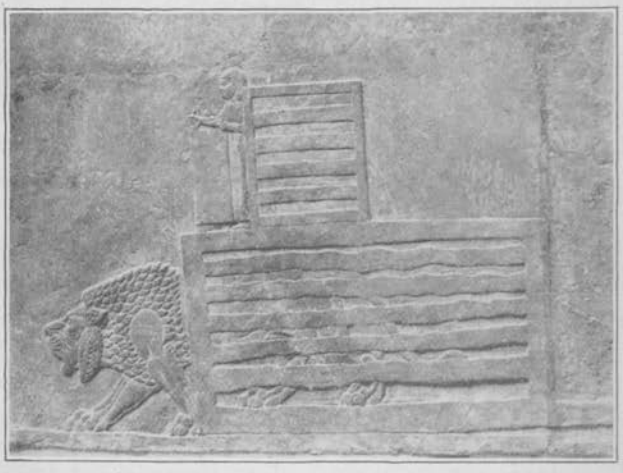

FIG. 71.—CAGED LION LET OUT TO BE HUNTED—*British Museum.*

on the attendant, who is trying to frighten him with a whip.

Fig. 72 shows one of the enclosures in which stags are being hunted.

There were many wars during Ashur-bani-pal's reign, and before the end of it Egypt had regained her independence; at the same time as Egypt

revolted, the people of Babylonia, Chaldea, and Elam were rebelling, therefore Ashur-bani-pal needed all his soldiers at home, and could send none to fight against Egypt.

After this there was an expedition to Arabia, to punish the chieftains who had helped the viceroy of Babylon, from which the king brought

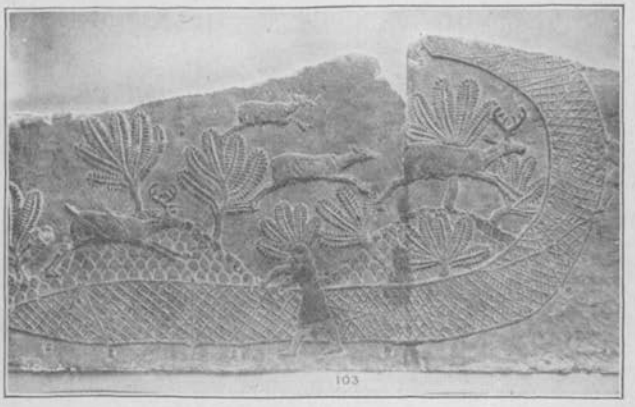

FIG. 72.—ENCLOSED PARK—*British Museum.*

home a great number of captives, and so many camels that, we are told, he distributed them among the people like sheep, and those that were sold at Nineveh only fetched half a shekel of silver—that is, about 1s. 4d.—each.

It is probable that the king did not always go out to battle at the head of his armies. He

preferred to hunt lions in his park, or amuse himself with banquets. He seems to have been of a very cruel disposition. There is a sculpture in the British Museum from his palace, which shows him feasting with his wife in his garden, while on one of the trees in front of him hangs the head of his enemy, the King of Elam.

Ashur-bani-pal had many wars with the Elamites, whom he finally defeated. He utterly laid waste their land and stormed their city of Shushan, carrying away great spoil from it. Indeed, the king boasted he so destroyed the districts of Elam that he caused the wild asses and beasts of the field to lie down in the habitations of men.

But at this time also, Zephaniah, the prophet of Judah, while warning his own city of Jerusalem to repent, uses almost the same language about Assyria itself. He declares that Assyria shall be destroyed, and Nineveh shall be made a desolation and dry like the wilderness. "And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations."

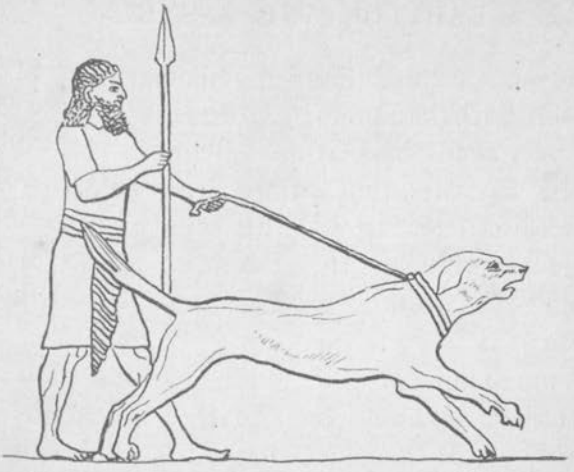

FIG. 73.—MAN LEADING DOG FOR THE HUNT—*British Museum.*

CHAPTER XV

THE ROYAL LIBRARY OF NINEVEH

ASHUR-BANI-PAL left something else of even greater interest to us than his beautiful sculptures—a magnificent library of books.

When Layard was excavating the northern palace at Koyunjik, he found on the floor of two small rooms a great number of baked clay tablets covered with cuneiform writing. Many of them were broken in pieces, as they had evidently been thrown down from a height, but some were still entire.

They were sent over to the British Museum,

and a few years later a scholar named George Smith, who had made a special study of the cuneiform writing, tried to piece the fragments together, and began to translate the texts. Later, he made expeditions to Koyunjik to collect more of the clay tablets; in this he was very successful, and there are now over twenty thousand of them in the British Museum. These clay tablets are the books which formed the library of Ashur-bani-pal.

You must not suppose that this king was the first one to have books. It was always the custom of the Assyrians to write down their legal documents and any records which they wanted to preserve on tablets of clay, which were generally baked in kilns to preserve them.

But Ashur-bani-pal seems to have been the first king who gave his attention to books and really cared for collecting them.

He sent his scribes to the older cities of Babylonia, to Erech, Accad, Calneh, and Babylon, where libraries had existed for hundreds of years, in order that they might make copies of older works, written in the Sumerian language, for his great collection at Nineveh. Ashur-bani-pal perhaps desired Nineveh to be greater than all other cities, and hitherto the cities of Babylonia had excelled her in learning.

Therefore writings on Astronomy, Geography, Botany, and many other subjects, in fact all the wisdom and learning known to the wise men of Chaldea, were stored up in Ashur-bani-pal's library.

FIG. 74.—WOUNDED LION—*British Museum.*

But many of the writings which the scribes brought back were in the old Sumerian language, which was little known in Assyria. For the Assyrians were not naturally fond of studious pursuits. Whereas the Babylonians learned the dead language of the ancient Sumer, so

that they might read the old Chaldean writings, just as we learn Greek and Latin, the Assyrians never troubled to do so. If they knew any foreign language at all it was that of Syria, called Aramaic, because this was useful to them in their trade.

As the Assyrians therefore could not read the ancient writings, Ashur-bani-pal had the Sumerian words put on one side of the tablet, with the Assyrian translation opposite it. And, in case any one wanted to learn the Sumerian language, he had spelling-books and grammars written out to make it easier for them. These very spelling-books and grammars were of great assistance to English scholars when they were attempting to decipher the old Sumerian writings.

There is also another class of tablets which have been both interesting and useful to scholars at the present day.

They are inscribed with the years of the different kings' reigns, and against each year is the name of some high officer of state.

If we want to speak of the time when a certain event happened, we say it was in such a year B.C. or A.D.—that is, we count backwards or forwards from a fixed date, the year in which our Lord Jesus Christ was born.

FIG. 75.—ASHUR-BANI-PAL'S HUNTING-DOGS—*British Museum.*

But have you ever wondered how the nations who lived before the birth of our Lord dated their events?

The Assyrians did it in this way. For each year of the king's reign they appointed a certain official of very high rank, and his name was used to date all the documents that were written during his year of office. Sometimes the king himself took this office. This officer was called the eponym. Tablets giving whole lists or series of eponyms were found in Ashur-bani-pal's library.

Now if the date of an event happening in the year of any eponym can be fixed, then we shall know the dates of all the other eponyms. In one list it is stated that, while a certain officer, Pur-Sagali, was eponym, an eclipse of the sun took place in the month Sivan, that is, the month which corresponds to the last half of May and the first half of June.

Astronomers at the present day have found out by calculations that there was an eclipse of the sun, which would be visible at Nineveh, on June 15th in the year 763 B.C. Therefore it is probable that Pur-Sagali was eponym in 763 B.C., and, taking this year as a fixed date, it is possible from the lists of eponyms which have been discovered to count backwards from

a few years before the reign of Ashur-nasir-pal, who lived in the ninth century B.C., to the reign of Ashur-bani-pal, who lived in the seventh century B.C., that is, from 893–666 B.C.

A great many of the clay tablets contained stories and legends in which the Assyrians believed, such as the legend of Sargon, that early King of Accad, and the story of Gilgamesh.

A whole series of tablets gives an account of the creation of the world by Merodach. This was probably copied from the tablets at Babylon, as it is to glorify the chief god of that city.

Many chronicles of the kings of Assyria were found in the library; among them is an inscription of Tiglath-Pileser III., which mentions among his tributaries Ahaz, King of Judah. Naturally there are very full annals of the reign of Ashur-bani-pal, relating in detail his various wars.

There are many reports from the astrologers, because both the Babylonians and the Assyrians believed that the moon and the stars had a great influence on the lives of men. There are also astronomical reports; here is one about the spring equinox: "On the sixth day of the month Nisan (March–April) the day and the

night were equal. The day was six kasbu" (*i.e.*, 12 hours) "and the night was six kasbu. May Nebo and Merodach be propitious unto the King my Lord."

A large number of what we may call business tablets were kept in the library.

Fig. 42 is one which records the sale of a piece of land for one *maneh* of silver, which is about £6 13s. 4d. of our money.

Fig. 76 shows another of these contract tablets. It records the sale of a house by a certain Sharru-ludari for two *manehs* of silver in the year when Sin-shar-utsur was eponym. A blank space was left on the tablet which the buyer and seller stamped with their seals to show their agreement to the sale. If they were poor men and did not possess seals, they pressed their thumb-nails into the clay.

And then there are letters!—how would you like to receive a little clay tablet in a clay envelope? You can see many such letters in the British Museum at the present day. There are letters from the king to his servants about his horses, others to the officers of his army about military affairs. Those which were found in Ashur-bani-pal's library were probably copies of the dispatches which were actually sent.

There are many prayers to the various gods.

The beautiful hymn to the Moon-god which is

FIG. 76.—TABLET FROM ASHUR-BANI-PAL'S LIBRARY, RECORDING THE SALE OF A HOUSE FOR 2 MANEHS OF SILVER—*Photo, Mansell.*

quoted in Chapter II. was found in Ashur-bani-

pal's library, written in Sumerian with an Assyrian translation of it.

There are also many incantations for the priests to recite on behalf of the sick people whom the demons have plagued.

Here is one which was intended to act as a charm against the spells that witches were

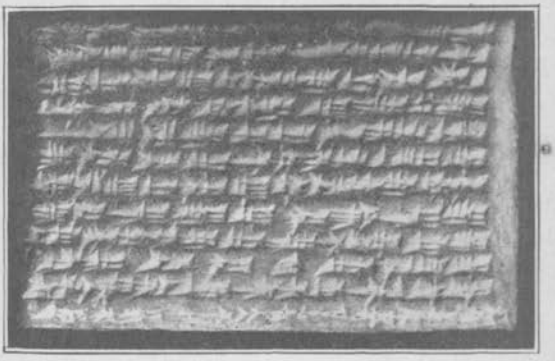

FIG. 77.—TABLET FROM ASHUR-BANI-PAL'S LIBRARY GIVING LEGAL DECISION—*Photo, Mansell.*

believed to cast upon men: "O witch, whosoever thou art, whose heart conceiveth my misfortunes, whose tongue uttereth spells against me, whose lips poison me, and in whose footsteps death standeth, I ban thy mouth, I ban thy tongue, I ban thy glittering eyes, I ban thy swift feet, I ban thy toiling knees, I ban thy laden hands, I bind thy hands behind.

And may the Moon-god destroy thy body, and may he cast thee into the Lake of Water and of Fire." * There are also a number of what are called Omen-tablets, by which the priests foretold what would happen in the future by certain events. For instance, one says: "When a dog entereth a palace and lieth upon a bed, that palace no man shall capture."

It is from these tablets that we learn so much about the daily life and the thoughts, not only of the Assyrian king, but also of the people over whom he ruled.

* British Museum Guide to the Babylonian and Assyrian Antiquities.

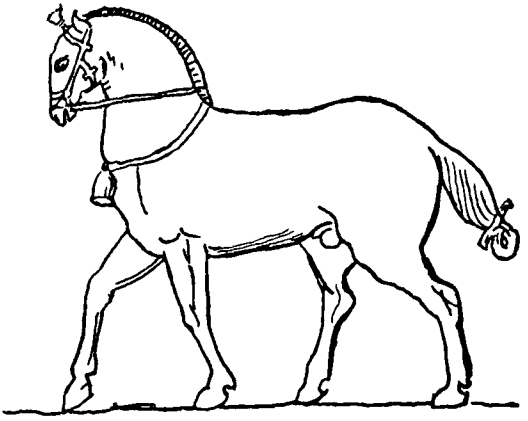

FIG. 78.—HORSE FROM PERSEPOLIS—*Rawlinson.*

CHAPTER XVI

THE MEDES

UP to the present we have spoken of the Assyrians and the Hebrews, whom we call Semites or descendants of Shem, and of the Egyptians, Phœnicians, and Canaanites, who were of the race of Ham; but we have said nothing at all about the descendants of Japhet, the youngest son of Noah. The descendants of Japhet lived at first in the country north of the Himalaya Mountains. It may be that they did not wander away from their original homes and seek new lands as early as the other peoples.

Through remaining in the same country for a long time they became more civilised, for when people are wandering about with no settled home, they have no time to think of greater comfort or refinement. They called themselves Aryans.

When at last the Aryans began to move further afield, some of them wandered to the south-east and entered India, while others went to the south-west, and came to the country between the Zagros and the Elburz mountains, where they settled down. Among these last were the tribes of the Madai or Medes, and the country in which they settled was called Media. If you look in the map you will see that Media is shut in on all sides except the south-east by mountain chains; to the south-east there is a high plateau, which is, for the most part, through want of water, a flat sandy desert.

A great deal of this mountainous country is very barren; the only parts which can be cultivated are the narrow valleys watered by the streams that flow down from the mountain sides.

The most fertile parts are the lands forming the basin of Lake Urumiah, and the plain through which the river Araxes flows. Most of the valleys are four or five thousand feet

above the sea, and this makes the climate very cold in winter.

We generally find that the people who live in a bare and mountainous country are hardier and more energetic than those who live in a fertile plain; and when first we hear of the Medes in history they are a brave and simple-minded race, very strong, and good fighters.

There were various Assyrian raids on Media, and it seems probable that the Medes agreed to pay an annual tribute in order to prevent the ravages which we know the Assyrian army always inflicted; but it was not until the reign of the great Sargon, who conquered Babylon and took Samaria, that Media became part of the Assyrian Empire.

Then, following his usual custom, the Assyrian king forced the conquered Medes to leave their homes, and he may have settled them in the eastern part of his empire, perhaps in Ashdod, or in some of the cities of Israel. We know that he transported the Israelites into the cities of the Medes.

About a hundred years after these events, a king, called Cyaxares, began to rule over the Medes. He paid great attention to his army, and introduced many changes in order to make it more efficient. Before his time each chief of

a tribe had led his own men to battle as the Ancient Britons used to do. And just as the Britons were always defeated by the well-disciplined Roman army, so the Medes could never win a battle against the Assyrians, fighting under the command of a single general whom they implicitly obeyed. Cyaxares altered all this; he arranged his men in troops according as they were archers or spearmen or slingers; the horsemen belonging to each tribe fought all together, instead of separately with the footmen of their tribe; moreover, the various troops were well drilled, and taught to obey a single commander.

But, before Cyaxares could use his newly formed army against Assyria, a great calamity fell upon the whole east country of Asia.

The Scythians, a fierce race of people who lived to the north of the Caucasus Mountains, invaded the land. They defeated the Medes, also the Assyrians, and they roamed over whole tracts of country, plundering, fighting, and nearly always victorious. The Assyrians had a much richer country than the Medes, therefore it is probable that the Scythians troubled them infinitely more.

In time, though very gradually, and after much fighting, Cyaxares beat back the Scythisan, and

forced them out of his country. Then he once more made preparations to attack Assyria.

The successors of Ashur-bani-pal were weak and unwarlike rulers; in the reigns of such kings the subject nations always took the opportunity to rebel.

FIG. 79.—MEDIAN ROBE (PERSEPOLIS) —*From Rawlinson*, vol. iii.

Cyaxares allied himself with Nabopolassar, the Viceroy of Babylon, and together they made war on Assyria. Nineveh was besieged for two years, and then fell. What happened at that time none can say, for no record has yet been found.

The Tigris is said to have left its river bed and made a fresh channel, thus breaking through the city wall. If this was so, then Nahum's prophecy was literally fulfilled—"The gates of the rivers are opened and the palace is dissolved."

The Assyrians were a nation of soldiers, and, when their stronghold of Nineveh was taken, their whole empire fell to pieces.

All the peoples who had been conquered

rebelled again, and refused tribute. In some cases, probably, they killed the Assyrian garrisons who were stationed among them. The captives who had been forced to come and live in the Assyrian towns had no wish to fight for their conquerors, and were quite willing to be ruled by another nation. So it came about that the Empire of Assyria was divided between Nabopolassar, the Viceroy of Babylon, and Cyaxares, King of the Medes.

Nabopolassar received all the southern part of the empire, and took the title of King of Babylon. He founded what we call the second Babylonian Empire.

Cyaxares received as his share the northern half of the Assyrian dominions as far as Armenia and Cappadocia in the North and the Mediterranean in the West.

Herodotus tells us that Cyaxares also became King of Armenia and Cappadocia; if this is so, it is possible that these countries had been at the mercy of the Scythians, and were glad to receive Cyaxares as a deliverer from their hated foe. And in a few years we find that, next to Babylon, the Empire of the Medes was the most powerful State in Asia.

FIG. 80.—CAPTIVES FROM LACHISH GOING INTO ASSYRIA—*Layard.*

CHAPTER XVII

THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

NABOPOLASSAR, King of Babylon, was a clever and energetic ruler; he organised his country so well that its people became very prosperous.

After the fall of the Assyrian Empire, the three great powers of the Ancient World were Egypt, Babylon, and Media; of these Babylon was the most important, through the strong government of Nabopolassar.

Even before the attack on Nineveh by the Medes and Babylonians, Pharaoh Necho, King of Egypt, had fallen upon the outlying provinces of Assyria in the West. He besieged Ashdod, then marched up to the north, and took possession of Carchemish.

Once more, like his great predecessors, an Egyptian king had gained rule over Northern

Syria, and his subjects had hopes of regaining the lucrative trade with Western Asia, which the fierce Assyrians had wrested from them. But this the Babylonian king would never permit. He promptly sent an army, led by his son Nebuchadnezzar, to Carchemish, and there Pharaoh Necho was utterly defeated.

What had been the policy of the tiny kingdom of Judah, again the buffer State between these two mighty empires? In 609 B.C., when Necho was advancing into Syria, Josiah went to fight against him, but was defeated and slain at Megiddo, and his son Jehoahaz, who succeeded him, was taken prisoner to Egypt. Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah, was made King of Judah by Necho, and forced to pay a heavy tribute.

After the defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish, the prophet Jeremiah, who was living at this time, and who realised that Babylon was all-powerful, urged Jehoiakim to submit at once to Nebuchadnezzar lest Judah be overwhelmed. But the princes of Judah were very angry with Jeremiah, and would not listen to him; they were more angry still when Jeremiah denounced their evil ways. He stood at the gate which led to the upper court surrounding the temple, and he earnestly entreated the people as they went in to worship, saying, "Thus saith the Lord of

Hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place." But the people would not listen, and very soon, as Jeremiah had foretold, the army of Babylon came down upon the land of Judah. The prophet Habakkuk, who also lived at this time, gives a vivid picture of this terrible foe:—

"For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling-places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful . . . their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat; they shall come all for violence." (Hab. i. 6–9.)

Jehoiakim submitted; and from this time dates the seventy years' captivity—the subjection to Babylon. But the Jews rebelled again and again. Under Jehoiachin, Jerusalem was besieged. When the king surrendered he was carried away in chains to Babylon, where he was kept in prison for thirty-seven years.

Moreover, we are told that at this time the King of Babylon carried away "All the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of

the king's house . . . all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land, . . . and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon" (2 Kings xxiv. 13–15).

Zedekiah, another son of Josiah, was appointed to rule over the remnant that were left. In nine years' time, however, when the country had somewhat recovered from the loss of all its prosperous men, Zedekiah seems to have made some sort of alliance with the King of Egypt. In vain Jeremiah protested. "Why will ye die," he said, "thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence?" Once more the army of Babylon came against Jerusalem; from the ninth to the eleventh years of Zedekiah's reign the city was besieged—a terrible siege of eighteen months.

All during the siege Jeremiah foretold the ultimate triumph of the Babylonians, and still urged the king to submit, lest the city should be burnt with fire. The princes of Judah suspected Jeremiah of betraying them to Nebuchadnezzar, and they put him in a horrible dungeon,

until even the king interceded for him. At last the city was broken into, and though Zedekiah and his army tried to escape by night they were overtaken and made prisoners. This time, not only were the people carried away captive, but their beautiful city of Jerusalem was destroyed and left in ruins.

The temple, built with such care by Solomon, and lately repaired by Josiah, the king's palace and all the houses of the nobles were burnt. The vessels of gold and silver and brass were taken as spoil to Babylon. Only the poor of the land were left to be vine-dressers and husbandmen.

FIG. 81.—BABYLONIAN HARP, FROM A CYLINDER—*Rawlinson.*

Jeremiah did not go into captivity. He was set free by order of Nebuchadnezzar, and for a short time he lived in the land of Judah. He may then have written the Lamentations over the City of Jerusalem. At any rate, it was either Jeremiah, or some one of the race of Judah who was living at that time, who mourned for the sad desolation of Jerusalem in some of the most pathetic and beautiful poetry which has ever been written.

It was only the man who had seen Jerusalem in her prosperity, and had rejoiced in her great-

ness, who could write: "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! . . . she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces; how is she become tributary!" (Lamentations i. 1).

Among the captives who were carried away with Jehoiachin was a certain priest of the family of Zadok. This was the prophet Ezekiel, who was settled at Tel-abib by the river Chebar. At his house many of the Jews gathered to listen to his teaching, and he continually urged his countrymen to put away their idols and purify their lives. And this they did. It is probable that the Jews who were taken into captivity lived together in a colony outside the walls of Babylon. We know from the story of Daniel and the three noble children, Ananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, how steadfastly some of them now held to their true faith. In time many Jews rose to positions of honour—Nehemiah, for instance, was the king's cupbearer—but always they remembered Jerusalem.

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. . . . If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning" (Ps. cxxxvii.). Always they looked forward to their return.

"When God bringeth back the captivity of

His people, Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be glad" (Ps. liii. 6).

Nebuchadnezzar did not send colonists into the land of Judah, so that, when the time came that the Jews were allowed to return, the land was in a large measure unoccupied, and ready for them.

FIG. 82.—ORNAMENT FROM N.W. PALACE, NIMROUD —*Layard.*

CHAPTER XVIII

NEBUCHADNEZZAR, KING OF BABYLON

WE first hear of Nebuchadnezzar as a young general fighting against Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish, and utterly defeating him. By this victory the Babylonians gained the supremacy over Syria; among the rulers who had to submit to them was Jehoiakim, King of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar was not able to follow up his victory and advance into Egypt, for he had to return in haste to Babylon on account of his father's death. Nebuchadnezzar was not only a good soldier, he was a great statesman, and he bent all his endeavours to make the Babylonian Empire the greatest State in Asia; by his numerous wars he made himself supreme over all the country between the Persian Gulf

and the Mediterranean Sea up to the border of Egypt.

But the Medes who had shared the Assyrian Empire with the Babylonians were also a new and vigorous race of people, and, though Nebuchadnezzar was now at peace with Cyaxares, he probably felt that at some future time the most dangerous neighbour to the Babylonians would be the Median Empire. He therefore set to work to fortify the city of Babylon, the capital of his great empire, so as to make it almost impregnable. He rebuilt the great walls—the one called Imgur-Bel—that is, "The dwelling of Bel"—which went close round the houses, and the other Nimitti-Bel—or "The foundation of Bel"—which was built at a greater distance, and enclosed land, which could be cultivated, so that enough corn might be grown within the walls in time of war to feed the people, and prevent famine in case of a siege. Herodotus tells us that on the outside of each wall was a deep moat, the soil dug out from the moat being made into bricks, which were burnt in a kiln, and then used to line the sides of the moat and to build the wall. The outer wall was between forty and fifty miles in circumference, of enormous height, and wider than any of our widest roads. When Jeremiah is prophesying the

destruction of Babylon, over and over again he makes mention of her walls. "The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire" (Jeremiah li. 58). This has been literally fulfilled, for, at the present day, no trace of these walls has been found, but that they

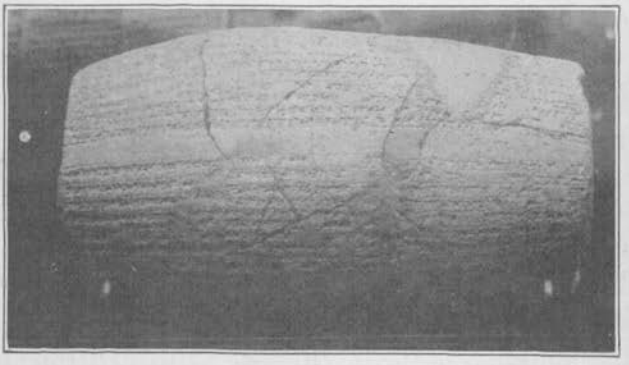

FIG. 83.—CYLINDER OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS BUILDING OPERATIONS IN BABYLON AND OTHER CITIES —*British Museum.*

actually existed we may be sure from an inscription of Nebuchadnezzar, in which he says, "The double enclosure which Nabopolassar my father had made but not completed and finished. . . . The Ingur-Bel and the Nimitti-Bel—the great double wall of Babylon—I finished, with two long embankments of brick and mortar I

built the sides of its ditch. . . . I strengthened the city. . . . The great gates of the Imgur-Bel and the Nimitti-Bel — the reservoir of Babylon at the time of the flood inundated them. These gates I raised. . . . Against presumptuous enemies who were hostile to the men of Babylon, great waters, like the waters of the ocean, I made use of abundantly. . . . Thus I completely made strong the defences of Babylon. May it last for ever!" *

The patron god of Babylon was Bel, or Bel-Merodach, as he is generally called.

The gates, which in olden times were generally the seat of government, were under his protection, and, as we have seen, the walls were dedicated in his honour.

Nebuchadnezzar rebuilt the great temple of Bel called E-Zagil, and he roofed the sanctuary with cedar brought from the mountains of Lebanon and overlaid with gold, just as Solomon ornamented his beautiful temple of Jerusalem, which Nebuchadnezzar destroyed. The mound of Babil was thought by Sir Henry Rawlinson, who explored it, to contain the ruins of this great temple to the god Bel.

The palace which Nebuchadnezzar erected for

* Rawlinson, "Five Great Monarchies," Appendix A, vol. iii.

himself was built of very fine and well-made bricks, each stamped with his name and titles (Fig. 84). The mound which is still called El Kasr, "the palace," has been used as a quarry for bricks for hundreds of years, and the houses

FIG. 84.—BRICK INSCRIBED WITH THE NAME AND TITLES OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR—*British Museum.*

of all the towns and villages in that neighbourhood at the present day are built of bricks which once formed the walls of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, and which still bear his name.

No sculptures were found in this mound, as at

Nineveh, for that was not the kind of decoration used by the Babylonians. They faced their walls with richly coloured enamelled bricks, which they were as skilful in making as the Assyrians were in carving their low-relief sculpture. Tiny fragments of these bricks are still to be found in great abundance among the ruins of Babylon. The chief colours which the Babylonians were able to produce were a brilliant blue, dark yellow, white, black, and red.

The prophet Ezekiel, who lived during the captivity near Babylon, was probably thinking of the brilliant decorations of Nebuchadnezzar's palace when he wrote of "men pourtrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans pourtrayed with vermilion, girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look upon, after the likeness of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity" (Ezekiel xxiii. 14, 15).

When the Medes made an alliance with Nabopolassar it was agreed that Amytas, the daughter of Cyaxares, should be sent to Babylon to be the wife of Nebuchadnezzar. But in the hot, stifling Chaldean plain the Median princess pined for her native hills; whereupon her husband employed his numberless captives to build for her an artificial hill.

Huge terraces of brick were erected, covered first with a layer of lead, then with earth. Trees, shrubs, and flowers were planted, and as the terraces rose one above the other, the air gradually became cooler and fresher. On the topmost terrace of all, a house was built for the queen. These were the hanging gardens of Babylon, called by the Greeks, who came at a later day to see them, one of the seven wonders of the world.

Nebuchadnezzar was very proud of his buildings and improvements.

We only know of his wars with the Jews from the account given us in the Bible; all the inscriptions which have been found up to the present time are accounts of his buildings in Babylon, and in the other great cities of his empire.

He held the gods in great honour, and he restored many of the temples in Babylonia, as well as the temple of Merodach. He mentions the building of the temples of the Sun-god at Ellasar and Sippar, and the rebuilding of the great temple to the god Nebo at Borsippa. This mound has been excavated, and it has been found that each of the seven platforms of this temple was faced with glazed tiles of the colour proper to the god to which it was dedicated.

One platform was black, caused by covering the tiles with bitumen. The second orange, the third red, the fourth gold, the fifth pale yellow, the sixth deep blue, and the topmost one, dedicated to the Moon-god, was faced in silver.

But the glory of Nebuchadnezzar's reign was the care which he took to make agriculture and commerce prosper, and his greatest work for agriculture was the way in which he regulated the waters of the Euphrates. He had all the canals which had been dug by former kings cleaned out, and their sluices and dams put into working order. Then he cut four canals right across the country, to unite the Euphrates and the Tigris, and deep enough for the merchant vessels to ply on; from these, smaller canals branched out in all directions to irrigate the fields.

He had a huge reservoir dug near Sippar, where the water which came down in the flood-time might be stored up, and then used to irrigate the fields in the dry season.

In the book of Daniel we get glimpses into the life and character of the king. We see him caring for the education of the Jewish youths of noble birth; yet in a rage condemning them at one time or another to most cruel deaths.

Very hasty and passionate was this king, also somewhat unreasonable, for he demanded of his wise men that they should remember his dream, which he himself had forgotten; but always he shows his reverence for religion, and he is quick and generous to recognise a greater God than his own. We see him keeping his court surrounded by his officers of state; but especially do we find him glorying in his royal city. "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (Daniel iv. 30).

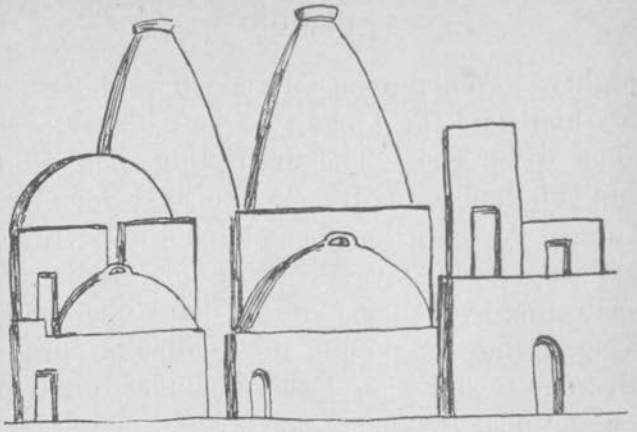

FIG. 85.—ASSYRIAN VILLAGE—*Layard.*

CHAPTER XIX

CYRUS

IN the British Museum there is a clay cylinder, written by order of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon.

The king says that he had a dream, in which he saw Merodach, the great god of Babylon, and Sin, the Moon-god, standing one on each side of him. Merodach told the king that he was to rebuild the temple of the Moon-god, so that Sin, the great lord, could have a house for his dwelling-place.

But the king answered that the Scythian had possession of the temple, and his strength was

mighty. Whereupon Merodach said that the Scythian and the kings who were his allies had come to an end. The inscription then relates that this had actually come to pass, for Cyrus, King of Anshan, had conquered the Scythians, and captured Astyages, King of Media, who was ruling over them. As a thank offering the King of Babylon rebuilt the temple of Sin, the Moon-god, and placed this cylinder under its foundations.

After more than two thousand years it has reappeared, and from it we learn the truth about the early history of Cyrus. We find that he was King of Anshan, one of the districts subject to Media, that he led his army against Astyages, defeated him, captured his city and all his treasure, then made himself ruler over the whole Empire of Media.

Astyages, the Mede, was the son of Cyaxares, but he was utterly different from his warlike and energetic father.

The Medes were not improved by the wealth they gained from the victories of Cyaxares. They became luxurious and indolent; at the court of Astyages men thought only of amusing themselves, and the king seems to have taken no care to keep up an army sufficient to protect his widely scattered empire. As the years of

his reign went on, there grew up a race of men who had never seen war, and were quite unaccustomed to the use of arms.

As in Assyria, the kingdoms which formed part of the empire of the Medes were ruled each by its own king. When Astyages was getting to be an old man, there was ruling over Anshan, a large district to the south-west of Elam, that active young king, called Cyrus. It is probable that before Cyrus went to war against Astyages he had conquered the province of Persia, as he is called in his own annals King of Persia.

The Medes and Persians all belonged to the Aryan race. They spoke very much the same language, they had similar customs and religion, and Cyrus seems to have treated the Medes as allies, rather than as a conquered people.

Though the Medes had let themselves grow weak and powerless through their luxury, they had not really lost their courage, nor their power of becoming good soldiers. In a few years they regained their old habits, and became some of the bravest warriors in the army of Cyrus. It is said that the Persian army was generally captained by Medes, which shows us that they were more proficient in the art of war than the Persians.

The laws of the Medes were combined with those of the Persians, and we know from the Bible stories that not even the most autocratic of the kings dared to disregard "the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not."

But there is still another clay cylinder in the British Museum which gives us a further account of the wars of Cyrus (Fig. 86).

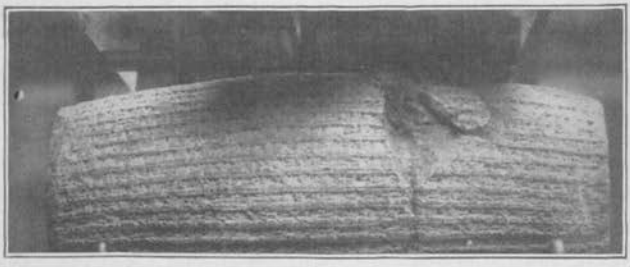

FIG. 86.—CYLINDER OF CYRUS—*British Museum.*

Its inscription relates that the King of Babylon, even though he built a temple to the Moon-god, had not entirely pleased the great Bel-Merodach, for he had gathered together in Babylon the images of other gods throughout the land. Therefore the mighty Lord of Babylon, the god Bel-Merodach, was so angry that he took away his protection from the King of Babylon, and sought out a righteous prince, Cyrus, King of Anshan.

Merodach, the great lord, commanded Cyrus to go to Babylon with his troops in countless numbers; without battle and without fighting Merodach let Cyrus enter into his city of Babylon, and the King of Babylon, who feared him not, he delivered into the hands of Cyrus. In reading this account we realise who were the people responsible for bringing Cyrus and his army into Babylon. It was the priests of the god Merodach, whom Nabonidus had offended by bringing into the city the images of other gods for the Babylonians to worship. They were afraid that this would lessen the power of their god, and in this way they themselves would be held in less honour.

Therefore they conspired against Nabonidus, and sending to Cyrus, perhaps treacherously, offered to open the gates, so that his army might enter the city.

It seems that Nabonidus was absent at that time, and his son, Belshazzar, who was ruling together with him, was feasting in the palace. The night chosen for the entry of Cyrus was that on which the Babylonians were celebrating the festival of Bel-Merodach, the greatest festival of the year. That was the night on which Belshazzar had the golden vessels from Solomon's temple brought into his banqueting-

hall, so that he and his thousand lords might drink wine out of them. In the same hour the hand writing appeared on the wall—"Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin"—and Belshazzar in his great fear offered the highest reward he could give to the man who could explain it, even the third place in the kingdom, after his father and himself. Then Daniel, at this time an old man, pronounced the doom of the Babylonian Empire. "Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." So it came to pass "in that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain" (Daniel v.).

You can read in the history of Herodotus a wonderful account of Cyrus and the siege of Babylon, but I am afraid none of it is true. The Persians, who wished to glorify their great king, told many wonderful stories about Cyrus to Herodotus, who says that he chose out the one which seemed to give the most probable account of the war.

But the cylinder written in the reign of Cyrus, probably by the priests of Bel-Merodach, contains the real reason why Cyrus was able to get possession of Babylon, a city of which the fortifications were almost impregnable, without a long siege and serious fighting.

When Cyrus became King of Babylon, he pleased the people and the priests by restoring to their shrines the images which Nabonidus had removed, and by allowing every man to worship as he liked.

He found people of many races gathered together in the city, but there was one nation who lived apart and worshipped an invisible God. These were the Jews, who for two

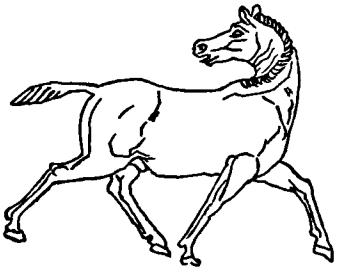

FIG. 87.—WILD ASS—*Rawlinson.*

generations had lived in captivity. The Persians themselves worshipped no idols; they believed in a great and good spirit. Though Cyrus was tolerant of all religions, and even offered sacrifices to the gods of Babylon, no doubt he had much sympathy with the Jewish worship, to which his own faith was in many points so similar. Probably also he wished the people in his empire to

be more contented under his rule than they had been under the Assyrian and Babylonian kings. Therefore he gave orders that the Jews should be allowed to return to their own country, and that special help should be given them on their journey back to their native land.

Cyrus was a clever general, and by his successful wars he added so many lands to his kingdom that when he died the Persians had the most powerful empire in Asia.

Cyrus was buried in a marble tomb, which is still to be seen in the plain of Murgab, near his capital city of Pasargadae.

On the tomb was carved these words:—

"O man, I am Cyrus, who won dominion for the Persians, and was King of Asia. Grudge not this monument then to me."

FIG. 88.—BOUNDARY STONE SET UP IN THE REIGN OF MERODACH-NADIN-AKKI, KING OF BABYLON. THE FIGURE PROBABLY REPRESENTS THE KING—*British Museum.*

FIG. 89.—LION WEIGHT—*British Museum.*

CHAPTER XX

THE LAST DAYS OF BABYLON

WE have spoken of the mighty palace of Babylon and her broad walls, but the walls enclosed many houses as well as the house of the great king. What of the people who lived in these houses? Unlike the Assyrians, who belonged entirely to the Semitic race, the Babylonians were descended from the Sumerians, the oldest inhabitants of the land, and from the Semites who came into the country and intermarried with the Sumerians: on account of this they were very different in character and probably in appearance from the Assyrians. In Fig. 88 you see a picture of an early king of Babylon which was sculptured on a boundary stone; he is rather short in stature,

and quite unlike the pictures of the Kings of Assyria.

The Babylonians were a cultured people; they liked literature, they wrote books, and they studied the sciences then known—geography, botany, astronomy, and astrology. When Ashur-bani-pal wanted to establish his library at Nineveh he had to send his scribes to the cities of Babylonia to copy the ancient writings. Almost every one in Babylon learned to read and write, whereas in Assyria very few people except the king's officials knew how to do this, and they generally employed public scribes. Indeed, the education of the boys and girls in Babylon was, perhaps, more difficult than that of children at the present day. Instead of the twenty-six letters of the alphabet which we have in English there were about five hundred and seventy cuneiform signs, of which more than three hundred were in common use; these had to be learned by every one who wanted to write the ordinary cuneiform language, which was used for legal documents, bills, and all business transactions. Besides this, there was the old Sumerian language, in which the hymns and prayers to the gods and many of the sacred books were still written. 'Just as in England before the

Reformation, the services of our church were said in Latin, so in Babylonia, the charms, the incantations, the religious forecasts, were all written in Sumerian, which became in time the sacred language, and the only one used in the religious services.

Many of the Babylonians who were engaged in trade learnt Aramaic, the language spoken by the Syrian traders whom they met in business.

It was believed that the god Merodach had taught the people much of their knowledge; this may be the reason why Bel-Merodach was held in such honour in Babylon, where he had two great temples, Ezida and Ezagil. The kings placed his name among their titles—as Merodach-Baladan, Merodach-nadin-akki, and Evil-Merodach—and the priests who served him had the highest position in the state. As we have seen, King Nabonidus probably lost his throne because he offended them.

In those days people believed that the stars had great influence over the lives of men, and through their study of the heavens the priests said they could foretell what would happen in a man's life.

Such knowledge so used is called astrology, and it was because they were believed to have

this power that the priests gained their influence over the people. When the prophet Isaiah is foretelling the fall of Babylon, he throws out a challenge to these people who professed to foretell the future,—"Let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee"—for he knew the utter worthlessness of their counsels.

FIG. 90.—MANEH WEIGHT —*British Museum.*

The Babylonians were not so fond of hunting and fighting as the Assyrians, though they often had to go to war with their powerful neighbours. While the Assyrians chiefly lived in towns and employed slaves to work their lands, many of the Babylonians lived in the country and farmed their own land, which was exceedingly fertile—wheat, barley, millet, lentils, growing in abundance. The sesame plant was cultivated on account of the oil, which was squeezed out of the seeds. Dates were the chief food of the poorer people, as they are at the present day in that country, and the date-palm grew everywhere. Indeed, the emblem of the sacred tree,

which is so closely connected with the Babylonian and Assyrian religion, is probably intended to represent the date-palm, and the king is often shown in the sculptures taking part in the ceremony of fertilising the date-palm. The people who were not employed in

FIG. 91.—THE SACRED TREE.

farming the land were generally merchants, and, living near the sea, they ventured abroad in ships to increase their trade.

Isaiah speaks of the Chaldeans "whose cry is in their ships," and when Ezekiel gives his parable of the eagles and the vine, he speaks of Babylon as "a land of traffic and a city of

merchants"; the country itself he calls "a fruitful field" — "a good soil by great waters."

But all this prosperity in trade made the people become rich and fond of luxury; until Babylon, to the people of that generation, just as Nineveh seventy years before, became a type of all that was pleasure-loving and luxurious.

Though among themselves the Babylonians seem to have been a peaceful race, yet they were haughty and cruel to the peoples whom they conquered.

Do you remember how Jeremiah the prophet wrote a book which he gave to Seraiah, the quiet prince, who went into captivity with King Zedekiah? And Jeremiah told the prince that when he came to Babylon he was to read the book (which was probably a roll of papyrus), then bind a stone round it, and throw it into the river Euphrates; as the book sank so it was a symbol to the Jewish people of the fall of the great city, in whose power they then were. And what was written in the book? A stern and terrible judgment on Babylon for her oppressions and her pride. "Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord God of hosts" (Jeremiah l.).

Though Cyrus took the city without fighting,

and seems to have treated the people very well, yet when the mighty empire founded by King Nebuchadnezzar and his father fell under the power of the Persians, Babylon was no longer the royal city of the king; therefore it gradually sank into decay, until at last the very name and site were forgotten. Thus for hundreds of years that wonderful prophecy of the desolation of Babylon which you find in the thirteenth chapter of Isaiah has been literally fulfilled:

"'And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

"It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their flocks to lie down there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and ostriches shall dwell there, and wild goats shall dance there. And wolves shall cry in their castles, and jackals in the pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged."

FIG. 92.—CONVENTIONAL REPRESENTATION OF VINE FROM THE LACHISH SCULPTURES IN SENNACHERIB'S PALACE—*Layard.*

NOTE ON THE HITTITES.

The Hittites, descendants of Heth, were a highly civilized and powerful nation. They were known to the Egyptians as the Kheta; Seti I. and Rameses II. waged many wars against them. They consisted of a number of tribes, each of which was probably ruled by its own king. The Assyrian kings speak of the number of kings of the Hittites which they have conquered, and the Syrians when besieging Samaria in Jehoram's reign exclaimed, "Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites" (2 Kings vii. 6). Their chief town was the great trading city of Carchemish on the fords of the Euphrates, and on the caravan route, a city which was much coveted by the Assyrian merchants, and which was subdued and forced to pay tribute by successive kings of Assyria until it was finally captured and peopled with Assyrian traders by Sargon. The Hittites attained to a high degree of civilization. They had invented a hieroglyphic writing which has not yet been deciphered. In the time of Shalmaneser the Hittites had lost some of their power and another people, the Aramæans, descendants of Aram, had taken a number of their towns. We know the Aramæans better by the name of Syrians, by which name they are mentioned in the Bible, though their language is always called Aramaic. They were united under one king, and their chief city was Damascus. The Hittite and Syrian tribes were very intermingled, and it is hoped that some day a bi-lingual inscription will be found written in the Hittite and Aramaic languages which will give a clue to the translation of the Hittite writings.

BOOKS USED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS VOLUME AND RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER STUDY OF THE SUBJECT

	PUBLISHER
Nineveh and its Remains, by A. H. Layard	*Murray*
Nineveh and Babylon, by A. H. Layard	*Murray*
The Monuments of Nineveh, by A. H. Layard	*Murray*
Nineveh and its Palaces, by I. Bonomi	*Ingram, Cooke & Co.*
The Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World, by G. Rawlinson	*Murray*
Ancient History from the Monuments, edited by A. H. Sayce	
Assyria, by G. Smith	*S.P.C.K.*
Babylonia, by G. Smith	*S.P.C.K.*
British Museum Guide to the Babylonian and Assyrian Antiquities	
By-Paths of Bible Knowledge—	
Babylonian Life and History, by E. A. Wallis-Budge	*Religious Tract Soc.*
Assyria: its Princes, Priests, and People, by A. H. Sayce, LL.D.	*Religious Tract Soc.*
The Times of Isaiah, by A. H. Sayce, LL.D.	*Religious Tract Soc.*
Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments, by A. H. Sayce, LL.D.	*Religious Tract Soc.*
The Hittites, by A. H. Sayce, LL.D.	*Religious Tract Soc.*

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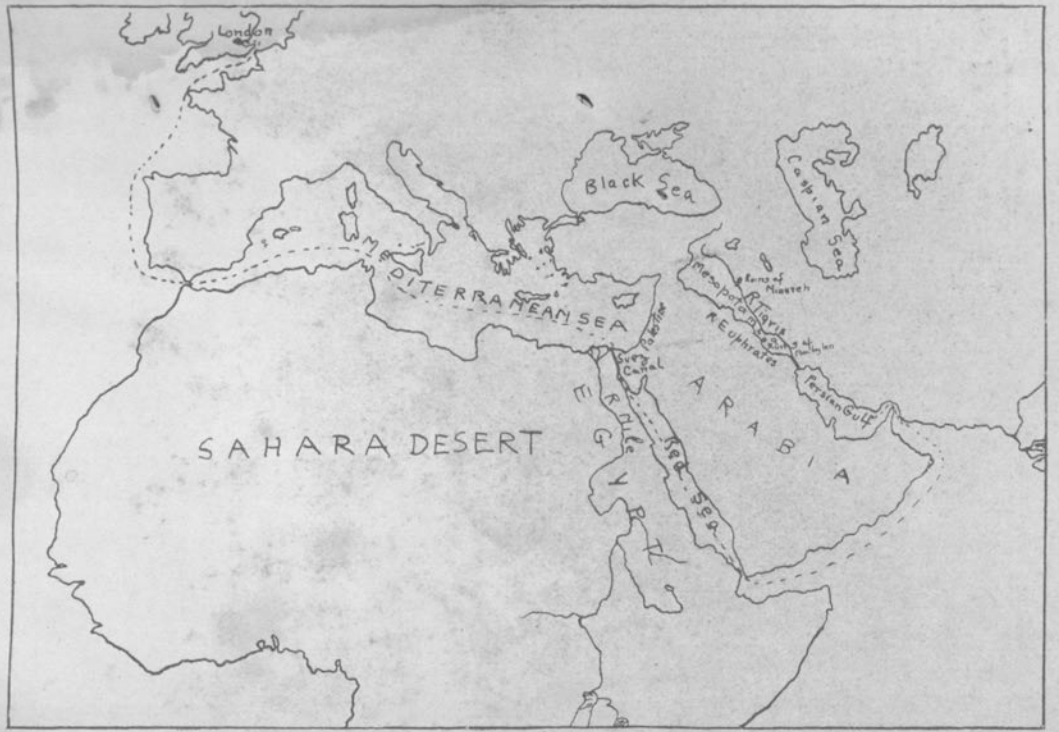
The Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology	
Records of the Past, Vols. I.–XI.	*Bagster & Sons*
The Dawn of Civilization, by G. Maspéro	*S.P.C.K.*
The Struggle of the Nations, by G. Maspéro	*S.P.C.K.*
Life in Ancient Egypt and Assyria, by G. Maspéro	*Chapman & Hall*
History of Art in Chaldea and Assyria, by G. Perrot and C. Chipiez	*Chapman & Hall*
The History of Sumer and Accad, by L. W. King	*Chatto & Windus*
The First of Empires, by W. St. Chad Boscawen	*Harper Brothers*
The Story of the Nations—	
Chaldea, by Z. Ragozin	*T. F. Unwin*
Assyria, by Z. Ragozin	*T. F. Unwin*
Babylonia and Media, by Z. Ragozin	*T. F. Unwin*
The Palaces of Nineveh and Persepolis Restored, by J. Fergusson	*Murray*
Authority and Archæology, edited by D. G. Hogarth	*Murray*
Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, by S. R. Driver	*T. & T. Clark*
History of Herodotus, trans. by G. Rawlinson	*Murray*
Annals of the Kings of Assyria, issued by the Trustees of the British Museum	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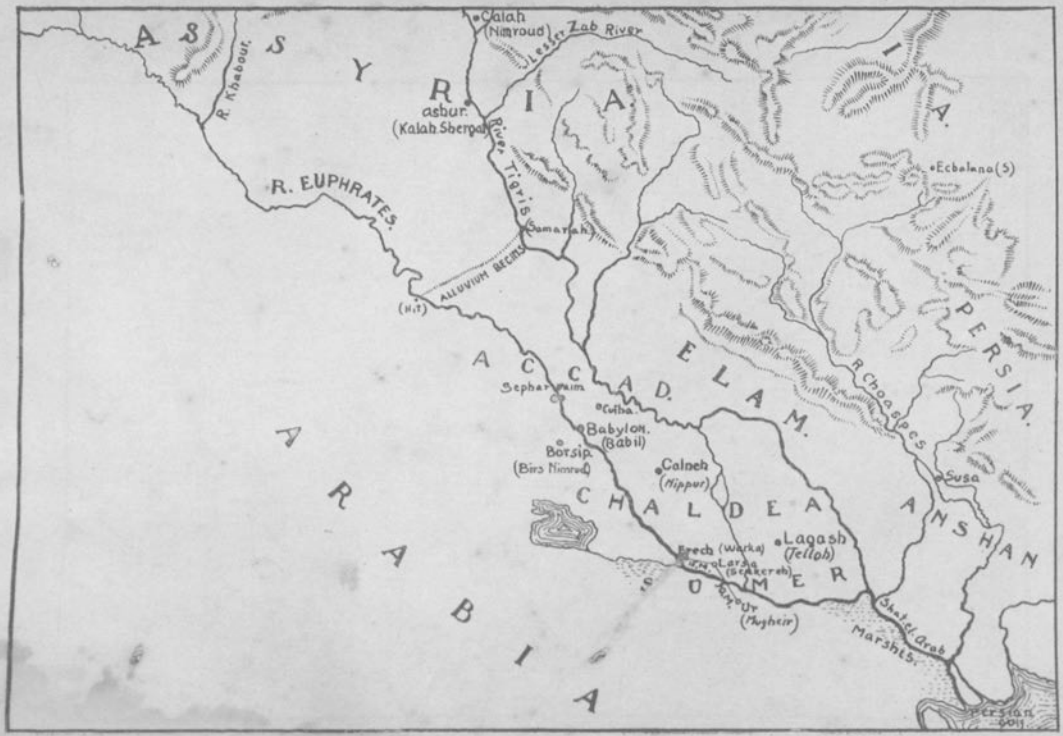
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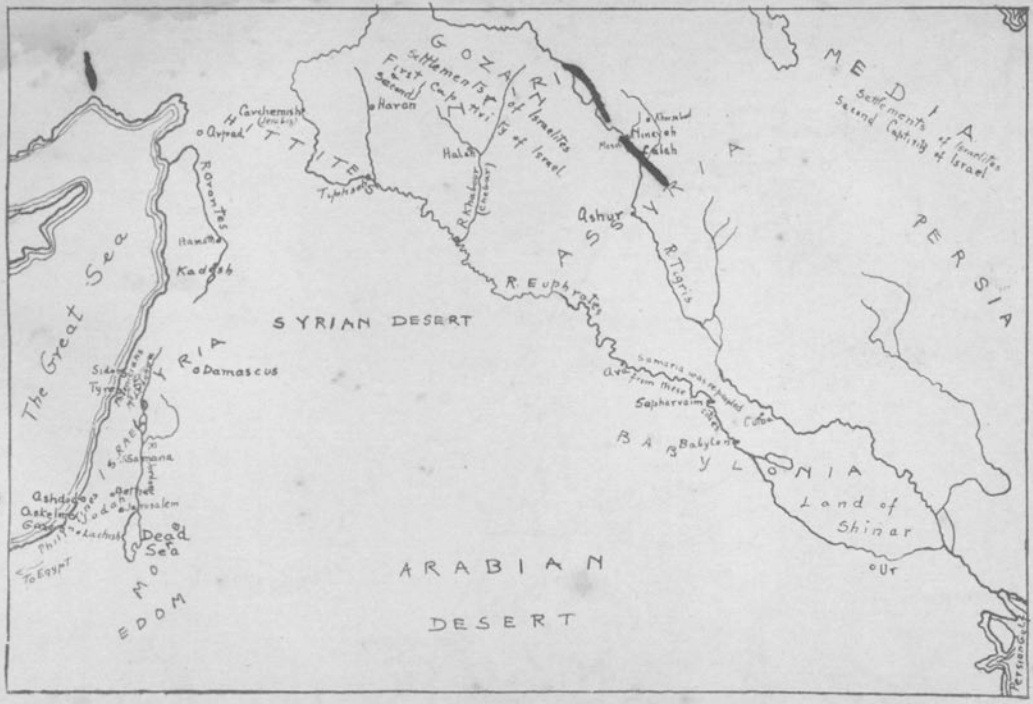
Lesser Zab River
R. Khabour.
asbur (Kalah Sherqat)
River Tigris
Samarah
R. EUPHRATES.
ALLUVIUM BEGINS
(Hit)
Ecbatana (S)
PERSIA.
ACCAD.
ELAM.
R. Choaspes
Sepharvaim
Cutha
Babylon (Babil)
Borsip (Birs Nimrud)
Calneh (Nippur)
Susa
CHALDEA
ANSHAN
Erech (Warka)
Lagash (Telloh)
SUMER
Ur (Mugheir)
Shatt el Arab
Marshes.
Persian Gulf
ARABIA

No. 2.


The Great Sea
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Orontes
Hamath
Kadesh
SYRIAN DESERT
Damascus
Sidon
Tyre
Samaria
Ashdod
Askelon
Gaza
Jerusalem
Bethel
Jericho
Dead Sea
To Egypt
EDOM
ARABIAN DESERT
HITTITE
GOZAN
Settlements of Israelites
Halah
Habor
Tiphsah
R. Khabour (Tributary)
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R. Euphrates
R. Tigris
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